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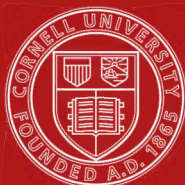


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NORTH REF. PROT. DUTCH CHURCH, COR. OF WILLIAM AND FULTON STS.

THE
NOON PRAYER MEETING

OF THE
North Dutch Church,

FULTON STREET, NEW YORK:

ITS ORIGIN, CHARACTER AND PROGRESS, WITH
SOME OF ITS RESULTS.

BY
TALBOT W. CHAMBERS,

ONE OF THE PASTORS OF THE REFORMED PROTESTANT DUTCH
(COLLEGIATE) CHURCH, NEW YORK.

SIXTH THOUSAND.

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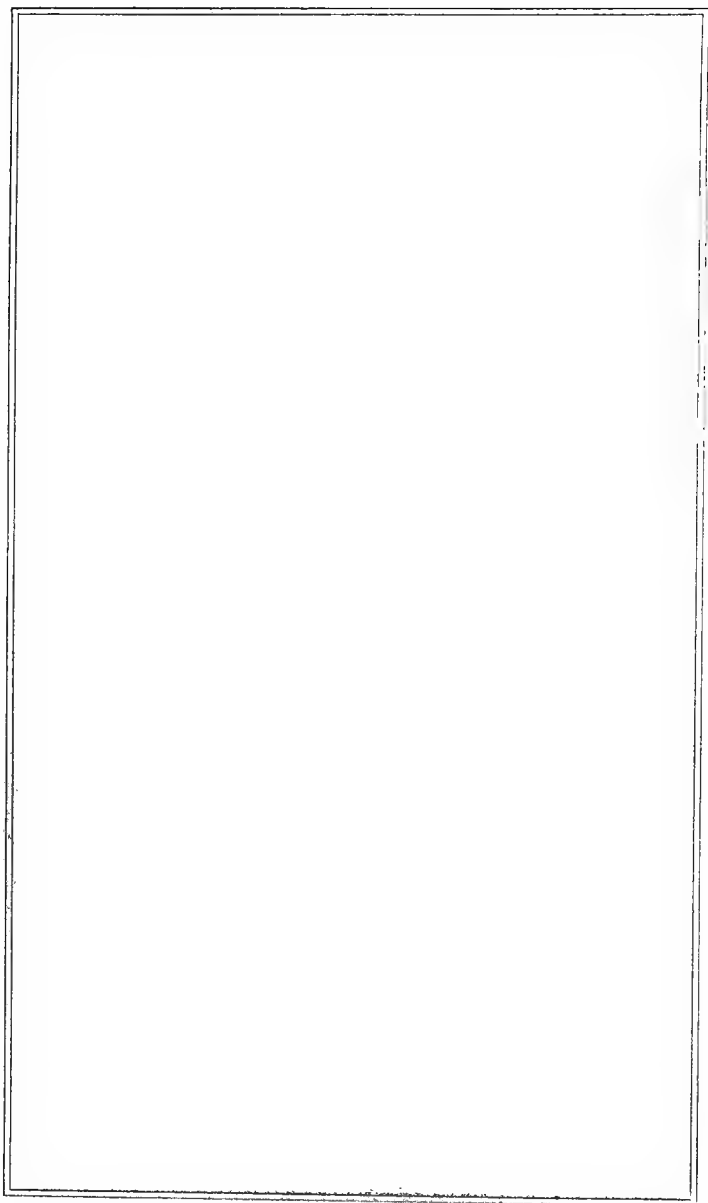


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REV. THOMAS C. STRONG,
On behalf of the Board of Publication of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church
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THIS VOLUME
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED
TO THE
REV. THOMAS DE WITT, D. D.,
AND THE
REV. THOMAS E. VERMILYE, D. D.,
THE AUTHOR'S ACTING COLLEAGUES IN THE SERVICE
OF THE
VENERABLE CONSISTORY,
WHOSE WISE AND LIBERAL COUNSELS RESULTED
IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
THE NOON DAILY PRAYER MEETING
IN THE
NORTH DUTCH CHURCH.



LETTERS OF DRS. DE WITT AND BETHUNE.

At the request of the Board of Publication, the following Letters in reference to this work, were kindly furnished by two of the most eminent and widely-known Divines in the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church.

LETTER OF REV. DR. DE WITT.

The Volume prepared by my Colleague, the REV. DR. CHAMBERS, entitled "THE NOON PRAYER MEETING," will doubtless attract the interest of the Christian public at large. It traces from the first institution of the Noon Day Prayer Meeting, in September, 1857, its onward progress and widening diffusion, with the blessed results which have followed. It has been carefully prepared, and full reliance may be placed upon the accuracy of its statements. It is hoped that it may be in some degree instrumental, under the Divine blessing, in cherishing and extending the religious influence now spread through our country.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Thomas De Witt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

New York, October 25th, 1858.

LETTER OF REV DR. BETHUNE.

The religious public, at home and abroad, must be hungry for full and authentic information respecting the origin and history of "THE NOON PRAYER MEETING," which, as is well known, had its beginning in the Lecture or Consistory Room of the North Dutch Church, Fulton street, New York. This work is the very thing we need. Its author, the REV. DR. CHAMBERS, one of the pastors of the Church on whose premises the Prayer Meeting has been held, has had every opportunity to know and collect the facts. His literary ability will be found to be worthy of his high position, and his deep sympathy with the blessed movement has shed through his pages an ardour of pious earnestness, controlled by a prayerful sobriety, which renders his Narrative both interesting and trustworthy. He deserves, as, doubtless he will receive, the thanks of us all.

Geo. W. Bethune

Minister of the Ref. Dutch Church, on the Heights, Brooklyn.

PREFACE.

DURING the present autumn the Executive Committee of the Board of Publication of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church passed the following resolution :

“Resolved, That the Rev. Dr. CHAMBERS be requested to prepare a History of the NOON PRAYER MEETING in the North Dutch Church, to be published by this Board.”

The author undertook to comply with the request with which he was thus honoured, and this Volume is the result. It will be perceived at once that it is not a history of the Revival of 1858, nor even of Noon Prayer Meetings in general, but simply an account of the first of those meetings. This first one was remarkable in its character, and still more in its results. For, while there were at the time when it began, manifestations of the special presence of the Holy Spirit of God in various Churches in this city, and doubtless elsewhere also, yet the Consistory building in Fulton street seems to have been the place where commenced the general work of Grace, irrespective of particular denominations—that general work which spread so rapidly over all parts of this country and even crossed the sea to the Old World.

But this fact furnishes no reason for claiming any thing for the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, as though the Revival gave her reason to boast over her sister Churches. Such a thought would be as foolish as sinful. For the Meeting in Fulton street, although held under denominational auspices, was in no proper sense sectarian. From the beginning Christians of various names united in it, otherwise it could not have been sustained a single week.

It was a bold and novel undertaking to attempt to establish a Daily Meeting for Prayer at Noon in the very midst of the business portion of this great city; and doubtless under other circumstances such an attempt would have signally failed. But there was a preparation for it in the public mind made by the providence of God. Instead of coming to an untimely end, as many even of the wise and good feared, it grew and flourished. The Lord gave it favour, and ere long it became the most popular and sought after of all meetings. Spiritual influence radiated out from it. Souls were converted through its instrumentality. Its example was followed in other cities and towns, until a line of Noon Meetings stretched from the sea-board to beyond the Mississippi. The greater portion of these have ceased to exist. The original one still holds on its quiet peaceful way, and at the end of the first year of its existence, is as well supported and as much blessed as at any former period.

Its protracted continuance, and the reports of its proceedings in the public press, have given to it a very great notoriety on both sides of the ocean. An eminent clergyman of this city, recently returned from abroad, informed the

author that the Fulton Street Meeting was as well known in England as it is here. One result of this notoriety has been to awaken throughout the country an intense curiosity respecting its origin, its locality, its character, and indeed all the circumstances attending it, as appears from the constant enquiries, both oral and written, which are addressed to the brethren in charge of the Meeting. To meet these enquiries is one of the chief objects the writer has proposed to himself. He has endeavoured to give a simple, lucid, connected account of all the matters upon which a stranger to New York might be disposed to desire information. This is the only reason why the first two Chapters, and many of the smaller details on the subsequent pages, have the space which is assigned to them.

Great pains have been taken to secure rigid accuracy in the statement of facts. Throughout the body of the work, free use has been made of the reports of the Fulton street and Globe Hotel Meetings, given from time to time in the religious journals of this city, and understood to be mainly from the pen of the Rev. L. G. BINGHAM, who, by these faithful reports, has conferred a great benefit upon the Christian public. In all cases, however, where it seemed desirable, and was at the same time possible, the author has made personal inquiries so as to verify the accounts. Of course, in regard to the statements by the different persons of facts occurring at a distance from this city, he is responsible only for the correctness of the reports which he gives. But he knows of no reason for doubting, in any case, the correctness of the statements themselves.

For the graphic, spirited, and glowing narrative of the Noon Meetings in Philadelphia, he is indebted to his life-long friend, and fellow-labourer in the ministry, the Rev. GEO DUFFIELD, Jr., of that city.

The author would gladly have taken longer time in the preparation of the work, and thus have made it more complete, but circumstances, over which he had no control, compelled him to put it to press without delay. Such as it is, he commends it to the kind regard of all who take an interest in its subject, and entreats the favour of Him whose works of grace it so imperfectly records, to bless it to the praise of his own glory and the good of souls.

It may not be amiss to add that the author has no pecuniary interest in the work. Whatever profits may accrue from the sale of it will go into the treasury of the Board which issues it, and be used for disseminating the wholesome words of sound doctrine.

New York, November 4, 1858.

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OPEN THY MOUTH WIDE AND I WILL FILL IT.

Evening, Morning and at NOON will I pray, and
cry aloud ; and He shall hear my voice.

Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou
feedest,

Where thou makest thy flock to rest at
NOON ?

Peter went up upon the house top to pray about the
SIXTH HOUR.

IF TWO OF YOU SHALL AGREE ON EARTH, AS TOUCHING
ANY THING THAT THEY SHALL ASK, IT SHALL BE
DONE FOR THEM OF MY FATHER WHO IS IN
HEAVEN ; FOR WHERE TWO OR THREE
ARE GATHERED IN MY NAME,
THERE AM I IN THE
MIDST OF THEM.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

The Dutch Church in America.

“THE REFORMED PROTESTANT DUTCH CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA” is accurately described by its title. It is called DUTCH because it was originally founded by the emigrants from Holland, who settled the states of New York and New Jersey, and is still for the most part composed of their descendants. It is called PROTESTANT, because it belongs to the number of those Christians, who in the sixteenth century protested in the strongest and most resolute form against the errors and corruptions of Popery. It is further styled REFORMED, because, of the two great divisions into which Protestants were at an early period divided, viz: the Lutherans and the Reformed, it has steadily adhered to the latter.

The doctrinal standards of this Church are six in number. They are the three Ancient Creeds, the Apostles', the Nicene and the Athanasian; the Belgic Confession, published in 1562, the Heidelberg Catechism in 1563, and the Canons of the Synod of Dordrecht, 1618.

The polity of the Church is eminently popular and republican. It maintains the parity of the ministry. It requires the Elders and Deacons, the representatives of the people, to be elected for the term of two years, at the end of which they cannot continue to serve without reëlection. Its ecclesiastical judicatories rise in gradation from the Consistory, which has charge of a single congregation, through the Classis and the Particular Synod, to the General Synod, which represents the entire Church. In judicial cases, an appeal is allowed from the decision of any of these bodies to the one above it, until the General Synod is reached, whose action is final.

The Dutch Church, in common with the Reformed Churches in Europe, has a Liturgy of moderate extent, a part of which, viz: that prescribing the mode of administering the Sacraments, Orders and Church Discipline, is obligatory upon all. The use of the remainder is optional with ministers and consistories.

Every settled pastor is required to expound the Heidelberg Catechism in course from the pulpit once in four years. Every applicant for admission to the Church must assent to the scheme of doctrine set forth in the Compendium (or abridgement) of the Heidelberg Catechism. A constitutional provision requires each Consistory, just before the administration of the Lord's Supper, carefully to inquire whether to the knowledge of those present, any of the members of the

Church have been delinquent in doctrine or life, in order that if such should prove to be the case, the proper remedy may be applied, and all offences be removed out of the Church of Christ.

Every minister is required to be a liberally educated man, for which reason a Theological Seminary was instituted at a date prior to the Revolution, and no candidate for licensure is allowed to present himself before a Classis, unless he has a certificate of scholarship from the Theological Professors.

THE CHURCH OF NEW YORK COMMONLY CALLED COLLEGIATE.

This, the mother church of the denomination in this country, is the oldest ecclesiastical organization in New York, having been founded previously to A. D. 1640. For more than a century and a half, this was the only Dutch Church in the city, and as the population increased, it multiplied its pastors and houses of worship. Subsequently, when independent churches were organized, each under the charge of a single person, this one, because of its plurality of congregations and ministers, became popularly known as the Collegiate Church, although that title does not appear upon its records and has no official authority.

The first minister was the Rev. Everardus Bogardus, who came over from Holland in the year 1633. He

was followed by ten others in regular succession, who also came from Holland and preached in the Dutch language. In the year 1764, the Rev. Dr. Archibald Laidlie was installed with the express view of meeting the wants of those who required the service to be in English. All the ministers who succeeded him preached in English only, except Dr. Livingston and the venerated Dr. Kuypers, the latter of whom for many years preached in both languages. The last sermon in Dutch was preached in 1803. The last minister who died in the service of the Church, was the Rev. Dr. Knox, the late senior pastor, who closed his useful life in the first month of the present year, and was carried to his grave with the deepest manifestations of regret and sorrow from persons of all classes. The present ministers are :—

William C. Brownlee, D. D. settled in 1826.

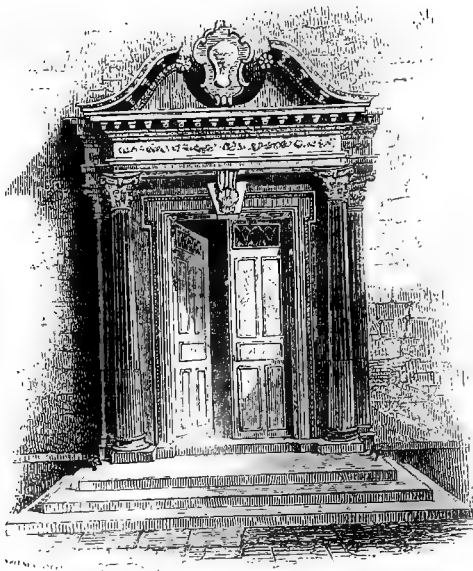
Thomas De Witt, D. D., “ “ 1827.

Thomas E. Vermilye, D. D., “ “ 1839.

Talbot W. Chambers, D. D., “ “ 1849.

The Church of New York began its services in 1626, in “an upper room,” the spacious loft of a horse-mill, but after a few years erected a plain wooden building, near what is now called Old Slip. In 1642, a much larger edifice of stone was put up within the Fort, which stood on the plot of ground which has long been known as the Battery. Fifty years after-

ward, the congregation removed to a new édifice in Garden street which had been built for their accommodation. This church, which, after being rebuilt of stone in 1807, was destroyed in the great fire of December, 1835, was the first to receive a geographical designation. After a second place of worship had been erected in Nassau street, in 1729, and a third in William street, corner of Fulton, in 1769, the oldest building took the name of the South Church, the second that of the Middle, and the last erected, that of the North, a name which it still retains, although it has been for a number of years the furthest south by a mile of all the Dutch churches on the island, the Middle having been relinquished for sacred purposes in the year 1844.



Principal entrance to the North Ref. Prot Dutch Church.

CHAPTER II.

The North Dutch Church.

THIS building is, with the exception of St. Paul's Chapel, the only church edifice now used for sacred purposes in New York, which dates back to a period prior to the Revolutionary War.

From the Rev. Dr. De Witt's Historical Discourse, pronounced in this building on the last Lord's day in August, 1856, we learn that measures were taken by the Consistory for the building of this house of worship early in 1767. In June of that year, it was resolved "that the church should be erected on the grounds of Mr. Harpending, that it should be one hundred feet in length and seventy in breadth, that it should front on *Horse and Cart Lane*, and be placed in the middle of the lot." The "grounds" here referred to, included not only the site of the church, but a number of lots in the vicinity, given to the Consistory by Mr. JOHN HARPENDING, or as he himself wrote the name, *Herbendinck*.

This gentleman had been received into the communion of the Church in 1664, just previous to the transfer of the Colony from Holland to England, and afterwards frequently officiated as deacon and elder. He was married in New York in 1667, and died in 1722 at an advanced age, leaving no children. He was a man of high standing as a citizen and a Christian. No one in his day was more active and useful in advancing the interests of the Church; and his character in the community is shown by the fact that he was frequently named in wills as executor. He was a liberal benefactor of the Church to which he belonged, both in his life and at his death. A tablet containing a coat of arms commemorative of Mr. Harpending, at this day hangs conspicuously on the wall above the pulpit of the North Church. It has depicted on it implements belonging to the currying business, and it is said that his trade was that of a tanner and currier. But the Rev. Dr. De Witt doubts whether this was really an original coat of arms, inherited or adopted by Mr. Harpending; or whether it was simply a design procured by the Church to commemorate his splendid bequest. This doubt, which cannot now be solved, need not obscure the truth and appropriateness of the admirable motto inscribed on the scroll, *DANDO CONSERVAT*; conveying the sentiment that the best mode of securing and giving permanence to one's property is to devote it to



The Coat of Arms of John Harpending.

charitable uses. This tablet was first placed in the Old Church in Garden street, which had several others of the like kind hung on its walls, and also a number of coats of arms curiously burnt on the glass of the windows. After the North Church was opened, the Harpending tablet was removed to the spot where it now hangs, and doubtless will hang while the building stands.

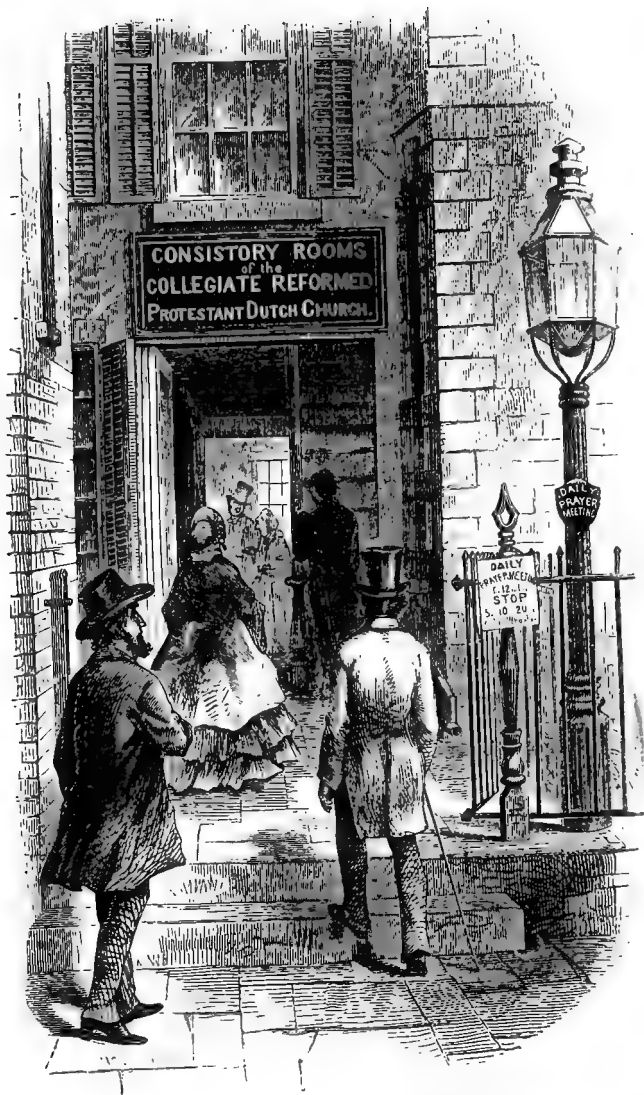
“Horse and Cart Lane” took its name from a tavern in the immediate vicinity which bore the sign of a horse and cart. It afterwards received the name of William street, which it still bears. The corner stone of the church was laid on the 2nd day of July, 1767, by Isaac Roosevelt, an elder of the Church and chairman of the building committee. The edifice was completed within two years at a cost of twelve thousand pounds or thirty thousand dollars; and on the 25th of May, 1769, it was dedicated to the service of God by the Rev. Dr. Laidlie. Each of the pillars supporting the galleries and roof, has certain letters inscribed underneath its capital. These are the initials of the donor of the pillar, whose liberality has thus been perpetuated from generation to generation.

The church is a well-built and imposing edifice of the Roman style. Its massive walls denote permanence and durability, and its whole appearance reflects credit upon the taste and skill of its founders. In the summer of the year 1844, a portion of the

vacant space at the rear of the church, between Fulton and Ann streets, was filled up by the erection of a plain, brick building, fronting on Fulton street, three stories in height, for the accommodation of the Sabbath schools, and for lectures and other services during the week.

As a portion of the front of the lot on which this building stands is occupied by a building used for trade, it is impossible to give a street view of the whole. But the engraving on the opposite page will furnish some conception of its general appearance, as it strikes the eye of those who come hither for the first time. This building, although a mere appendage to the North Church, yet has been the means of giving to the main edifice its chief notoriety in later days. The circumstances which led to this are now to be recounted.

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CONSISTORY BUILDING OF THE NORTH CHURCH.

CHAPTER III.

Missionary Labours in the North Church.

FOR sixty or seventy years after its completion, the North Church was crowded with worshippers. Its position, its venerable appearance, the pure Gospel which never failed to resound within its walls, and especially the piety and gifts of the illustrious line of ministers who in turn or in succession occupied its pulpit, all contributed to render it a favourite place of worship, not only with people of Dutch descent, but with many others of very different origin and associations. There was a time not very remote when every seat was occupied at any ordinary service on the Lord's day.

But of late years the tendency has been quite the other way. The rapid and constant growth of the city demanded ever increasing accommodations for its trade and commerce. Streets once filled with the families of substantial and opulent citizens were invaded by shops and warehouses, and in a short

time entire rows of houses, which formerly had served their occupants at once for a place of business and a dwelling, were replaced by stately blocks adapted solely to business purposes. The narrow wedge-like shape of the lower part of the island upon which New York is built, rendered this change a matter of necessity, although few even of the most sagacious foresaw the rapidity with which it came on and the extent to which it would reach. Of course the families which removed to a distance of one or two miles from the church, soon found that however disagreeable it was to change their place of worship, that change was unavoidable, and they must of necessity resort to new temples more convenient to their usual residences. As this process went on, the attendance at the North Church became more and more scanty and irregular, until at length the congregation even on the Lord's day morning was reduced almost to a skeleton.

Yet there was no decrease in the population immediately around the old edifice. The census showed that the lower wards of the city had rather increased than lost their numbers. But while the numerical proportions continued the same, the character of the people was greatly changed. Instead of the staid, settled families of fixed principles and ordinary habits who once filled the churches there to their utmost capacity, there was now a mixed multitude which might well be compared to the heterogeneous crowd

which thronged the streets of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. The immigration which entered the new world through the port of New York found its temporary home in the lower part of the city. Besides the immense mass constantly *in transitu*, very many sought to become permanent residents and naturally clung to that part of the city where they first found acquaintance and shelter. These people came from every part of Europe, and some even from the remoter regions of Asia. The greater part brought with them no habits of reverence or worship, and those who did, very soon lost them amid the breaking up of old associations, and the bustle and excitement of the new and strange scenes into which their removal introduced them. At all events very few of them ever of their own accord sought to avail themselves of the convenient opportunities for worship provided by the venerable edifices which had now become practically free to all. Placards were hung upon the gates of the North Church inviting whosoever would to enter and worship without money and without price, but very few accepted the invitation.

This state of things became still more painful and alarming, when the Brick Presbyterian Church, which, in its commanding situation and under the care of its accomplished and venerable pastor, the Rev. Gardner Spring, D.D., had stood for so many years as a stronghold of Zion, had been removed, and the

popular Broadway Tabernacle, so well known and so generally well-filled, had in like manner yielded to necessity. It was evident now that something must be done with a direct view to carry the Gospel to the masses of the down town population. It is true, Trinity Church, St. Paul's Chapel, and the Methodist Church in John street still remained, and that the venerable corporation of the first named had instituted and was zealously carrying out a wise system of ministrations, exactly adapted to the character and condition of the people living within the sound of their church bells. But what were these among so many? Were their edifices crowded to their full extent at every service, still there would be multitudes wholly unreached by any religious influence. A wide field, especially in the region east of Broadway, lay untouched, and it was white unto the harvest.

This state of things had often been contemplated with anxious concern by Christians. But the floating character of the population, its exceedingly diverse materials, its devotion to material wants, its want of sympathy with our habits and usages, and its jealousy of intrusion on the part of those in a different social position, all made the work alike difficult and unpromising. Still it was felt that a debt was due to that part of the city and its present inhabitants. The subject was therefore brought before the Consistory of the Collegiate Church as appears by the

ensuing transcript from the official minutes of that body.

“The Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of the City of New York. In Consistory, May 7, 1857.

“MR. WILKIN offered the following preamble and resolutions :

“Whereas church accommodation in the lower part of the City has become seriously diminished by the recent removal of the Brick Presbyterian, and Broadway Tabernacle Churches, leaving the North Church almost alone in the midst of a large population stationary as well as floating, therefore, Resolved, That it be referred to a Committee of three to devise such measures as may seem most conducive to an increased interest in and attendance upon the Divine Word and ordinances, as dispensed in that Church, by individuals and families residing in that vicinity, and also to any other ends connected with the spiritual growth and prosperity of that portion of our Zion; and that they report to this Consistory at a subsequent meeting.

“This paper was adopted, and Messrs. WILKIN, SCHIEFFELIN and Cook, were appointed the Committee.

“Extract from the minutes,

“GEO. S. STITT, Clerk.”

At the next regular meeting of the Consistory, held June 4, this Committee reported a series of resolutions

contemplating the appointment of one minister and several lay missionaries, to be employed as auxiliaries to the pastors, in making the North Church a centre of religious influence upon the surrounding vicinity. The report was accepted, and the consideration of it made the special order for an extraordinary session of the Consistory, to be held a fortnight later. This meeting was duly held, and the whole subject was canvassed with great care and detail. Considerable difference of opinion was expressed, but in the end there was a general and hearty concurrence in the action which stands thus recorded in the official minutes.

“The Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of the City of New York. In Consistory, June 18, 1857.

“The special order being the report of the Special Committee on the North Church, submitted at the last meeting, was taken up and discussed, and on motion the following resolution was adopted:

“Resolved, That the Elders and Deacons worshipping at the North Church, be a Committee to employ a suitable person or persons to be engaged in visiting the families in the vicinity, and inducing them to attend the services in that church; and also to bring children into the Sabbath school, and to use such other means as may be deemed advisable for extending our Redeemer’s Kingdom in that portion of our city; and that a sum not to exceed one thousand dollars



J. C. Lanphier

be appropriated and placed at the disposal of the said Committee.

“Extract from minutes,

“GEO. S. STITT, Clerk.”

The officers referred to in the foregoing resolution were Messrs. CHARLES VAN WYCK and AGRICOLA WILKIN, Elders ; and Messrs. WILLIAM ALLASON, FREDERICK COOK and EBENEZER MUNROE, Deacons. These gentlemen entered upon the work assigned them with great alacrity and diligence, and as the result showed, with remarkable success. By far the most active was Mr. WILKIN, who, as he had originally proposed the enterprize, spared no pains in carrying it out, and who by his constant attendance at Fulton street, his energy, perseverance, discretion, courtesy and catholic spirit, has laid all who are interested in the work there, under no small obligations.

The first effort of the Committee was to procure a suitable person to act as a lay missionary. A kind Providence turned their eyes to JEREMIAH C. LANPHIER, a gentleman who had never before been engaged in such work, but whose character and general deportment led them to suppose that he would prove to be exactly the man for the position. They were not disappointed. Mr. Lanphier, who has been justly described by the correspondent of an eastern Journal as “tall, with a pleasant face, an affectionate manner,

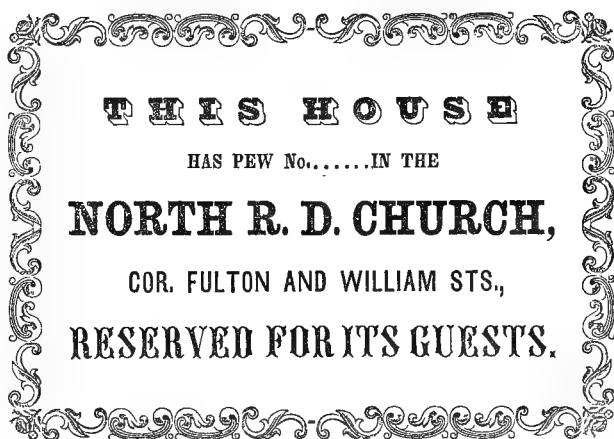
and indomitable energy and perseverance; a good singer, gifted in prayer and exhortation, a welcome guest to any house, shrewd and endowed with much tact, and common sense," was born in Coxsackie, N. Y., in 1809, and came to this city about twenty years ago, where he engaged in mercantile pursuits. In the year 1842 he made a public profession of Christ in the Broadway Tabernacle Church, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. E. W. Andrews. After some years he transferred his relation to the Presbyterian Church under the charge of the Rev. James W. Alexander, D. D., and continued there until he was called by the Consistory's Committee to the arduous and self-sacrificing duties of his present post. Discontinuing at once his secular business, he entered upon this work on the first day of July, 1857. The work assigned to him was to visit personally the entire region lying around the North Church, to invite the adults to attend the regular services in the sanctuary and induce the children to attach themselves to the Sabbath school, and in all suitable ways win souls to Christ. To facilitate his labours a small folded sheet was circulated, containing on one side a spirited cut of the church edifice, and on the other a brief outline of its history, concluding with the following announcement:

“The Consistory, anxious that in the spiritual destitution of this part of the city, suitable investigations and labours may be employed, in order that the ‘poor may have the Gospel preached unto them,’ have obtained the services of a pious layman, Mr. J. C. LANPHER. He will devote his time and efforts to explore this lower part of the city, and, with all kindness and fidelity, to attract those whom he visits to the house of God, and to place parents and children under auspices favorable to their temporal and spiritual welfare. Although a number of pews are held by individuals and families, yet far the larger number of those in the body of the church, as well as all in the gallery, are entirely free, and all who are willing are cordially invited to occupy them, ‘without money and without price.’ Where families may signify their purpose to be stated worshippers in this house, the sexton, on application, will designate pews which they may regularly occupy. In the CONSISTORY BUILDING, immediately behind the church, there are very convenient rooms for Sabbath school, Prayer meetings, etc. It is very desirable that an effort to fill up largely the Sabbath school should be made. It is an important field for such an effort. May we not hope that there are many thoughtful or pious young men in this vicinity, who will unite to bear a combined influence to accomplish such an end? Transient visitors in the city, and sojourning in this part, are cordially invited

to worship in the *Old* and venerable NORTH CHURCH. The Consistory commend Mr. LANPHIER to the confidence and kind regard of all whom he may visit, with the prayer that he may be the instrument of blessing to them for time and eternity."

The Missionary proceeded systematically in his work. He divided the field into districts, and commenced a course of regular visitation from house to house, calling upon each family, and, as far as possible, upon each individual. When he found them attached to, or in the habit of attending other places of worship, no effort was made to lead them away. The whole movement has been free from proselytizing from its commencement. But when, as was the fact in the great majority of cases, no habits of worship existed, Mr. Lanphier courteously invited those whom he met to avail themselves of the large and stately edifice so near at hand. As opportunity served, he offered prayer with these persons, drew them into conversation upon the great and delicate question of the soul's relation to God, and sought by the distribution of Bibles and tracts, by the use of the temperance pledge, and by all other lawful means, to win them to the love and service of the Saviour. The Missionary bestowed special pains upon the hotels and the boarding houses with which that portion of the city abounds. The proprietors of these were in-

formed, not only that they and their guests were welcome to the services in the North Church, but that a pew or pews bearing a specific number would be appropriated exclusively to their use; so that whenever a transient or regular boarder should present himself at the church door, and mention the house where he was staying, he would be immediately conducted to the designated pew. Placards, of which the following is a specimen, were accordingly hung up in the halls and public rooms:



And in addition, smaller cards, with a list of the ministers and the various services, were put into the hands of the chambermaids to be distributed among the guests on each Lord's day.

The happy results of these persistent efforts, prose-

cuted with so much discretion and Christian love, soon appeared in the increased numbers attracted to the Old North. The Sabbath school was replenished with both teachers and scholars, and the regular services of the Lord's day drew together an attentive and gratifying audience. What added to the interest of this state of things was the fact that, contrary to what is usual in ordinary places of worship, the greater part of the congregation was composed of men. Many of these were, of course, transient visitors of the city, but with rare exceptions they conducted themselves as devout and interested worshippers; and the ministers who occupied the pulpit took particular pleasure in preaching the Gospel to an audience of this character.

CHAPTER IV.

The Origin of the Noon Prayer Meeting.

THE next step in these proceedings was one the results of which have resounded through the Christian world, and produced an impression which will never be erased from the minds of the present generation. This was the establishment of a Prayer Meeting for business men, to be held in the middle of the day.

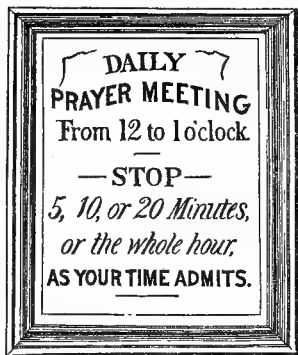
It originated in this way. Although the efforts of the Lay Missionary had been followed by the gratifying results already referred to, yet it is not to be supposed that his duties were always easy, or his best endeavours always successful. On the contrary, he experienced frequent discouragements, and sometimes had his faith sorely tried and his hopes painfully frustrated. But on returning to the room in the Consistory building which he usually occupied, he was accustomed to spread out his sorrows before the Lord, and seek fresh supplies of grace and zeal by communion with Him who is invisible. Nor was he dis-

appointed. Waiting upon the Lord, he renewed his strength; calling upon God, he was answered. His own soul was cheered and refreshed, and he was enabled to set forth upon his daily rounds with a quickened sense of the Divine favour, and a heartier assurance that his labour would not be in vain in the Lord.

This fresh, personal experience of the blessedness and power of prayer suggested to Mr. Lanphier's mind that there might be others, especially those engaged in business, to whom it would be equally pleasant and profitable to retire for a short period from secular engagements and engage in devotional exercises. This seemed the more feasible, because it was the custom in many mercantile and manufacturing establishments to allow to their operatives the hour between twelve and one o'clock for rest and refreshment. This period is also appropriated to the same purpose by carmen, porters, and day labourers of every description. It occurred to Mr. Lanphier that if the exercises were confined strictly to the hour, if they were suitably varied by singing and by occasional remarks as the feelings of any brother should prompt him, and if it were understood that no one was compelled or even expected to remain the whole time, but that all were at liberty to come and to go just as their engagements or their inclination led them, that a meeting so free, so popular, so spontaneous as it were, might meet with favour and be a means of good.

Accordingly he consulted with the Committee of the Consistory and others, and although none of these were so sanguine and hopeful of good as himself, they cheerfully acquiesced in the arrangement. No one at that time thought of holding the meeting every day: it was supposed that a very desirable point would be gained, were men induced only once a week to interrupt the current of secular pursuits, and turn aside in the middle of the day to seek God in the exercises of prayer and praise, and stir each other's souls by brief, fervent exhortations.

Considerable pains were taken to give notice of the intended meeting. Not only did the Missionary in his visits apprise those whom he met, but a neat handbill was prepared, describing the character of the meeting, suggesting the importance of frequent supplication, and concluding with some familiar stanzas on the use of prayer and the proper mode of offering it. This handbill, a copy of which is given on the next page, was extensively circulated in hotels, boarding houses, shops, factories, counting rooms, and private dwellings in the vicinity. The following placard was hung at the gate-way on the street.



HOW OFTEN SHALL I PRAY ?

As often as the language of prayer is in my heart ; as often as I see my need of help ; as often as I feel the power of temptation ; as often as I am made sensible of any spiritual declension, or feel the aggression of a worldly, earthly spirit.

In prayer we leave the business of time for that of eternity, and intercourse with man for intercourse with God.

A Day Prayer Meeting is held every **WEDNESDAY**, from 12 to 1 o'clock, in the Consistory building, in rear of the North Dutch Church, corner of Fulton and William streets, (entrance from Fulton and Ann streets.)

This meeting is intended to give merchants, mechanics, clerks, strangers and business men generally, an opportunity to stop and call upon God amid the daily perplexities incident to their respective avocations. It will continue for one hour; but it is also designed for those who may find it inconvenient to remain more than 5 or 10 minutes, as well as for those who can spare the whole hour. The necessary interruption will be slight, because anticipated; and those who are in haste can often expedite their business engagements by halting to lift up their hearts and voices to the throne of grace "in humble, grateful prayer."

ALL ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND.

Benefits of Prayer.

Prayer is appointed to convey

The blessings God designs to give :

Long as they live should Christians pray,

For only while they pray they live.

If pain afflict, or wrongs oppress ;

If cares distract, or fears dismay ;

If guilt deject ; if sin distress—

In every case still watch and pray.

'T is prayer supports the soul that's weak ;

Tho' thought be broken, language lame,

Pray, if thou canst or canst not speak ;

But pray with faith in Jesus' name.

Depend on Him, thou canst not fail ;

Make all thy wants and wishes known ;

Fear not, His merits must prevail ;

Ask but in faith—it shall be done.

How to Pray Aright.

I often say my prayers—

But do I ever pray ?

Or do the wishes of my heart

Suggest the words I say ?

'T is useless to implore,

Unless I feel my need,

Unless 't is from a sense of want

That all my prayers proceed.

I may as well kneel down

And worship gods of stone,

As offer to the living God

A prayer of words alone.

For words without the heart

The Lord will never hear ;

Nor will he ever those regard

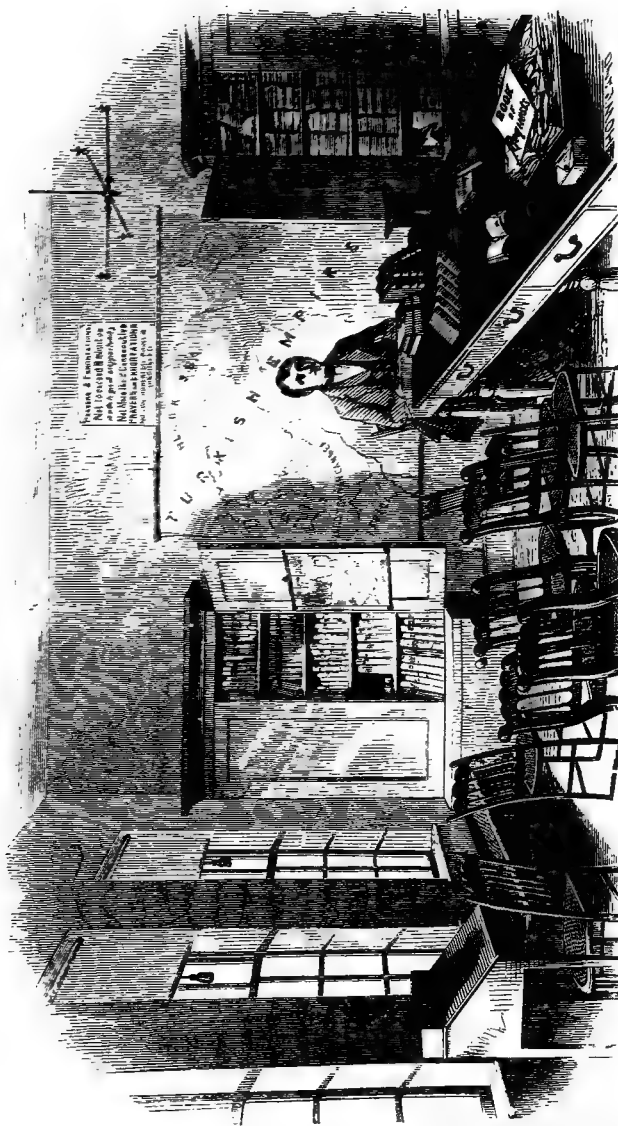
Whose prayers are insincere.

Lord ! teach me what I want,

And teach me how to pray ;

Nor let me e'er implore thy grace,

Not feeling what I say.



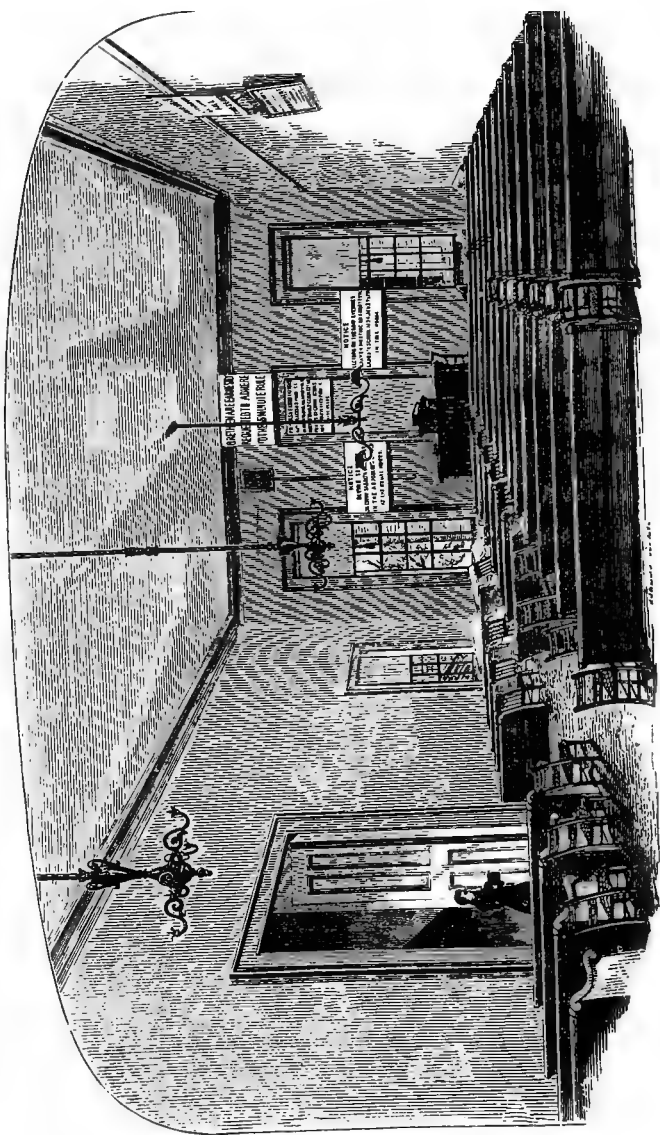
Third Story Room in the Consistory Building.

The place appointed for the meeting was the front room in the third story of the Consistory building. The plate here inserted is taken from a photograph, and gives an accurate representation of the room as it was then and still is furnished. The figure seated at the table is the originator of the enterprise, Mr. Lanphier.

At twelve o'clock, on the 23rd day of September, 1857, the door was thrown open, and the Missionary took his seat to await the response to the invitation which had been given. After a half hour's delay, the steps of one person were heard as he mounted the staircase. Presently another appeared and another, until the whole company amounted to six. After the usual services of such a meeting, they dispersed. On the next Wednesday, September 30th, the six increased to twenty, and the subsequent week, October 7th, as many as forty were present. During the interval between the first meeting and the third, Mr. Lanphier had consulted with Mr. Wilkin, the leading member of the Consistory, on the propriety of making the meeting semi-weekly or daily. It seemed to them that there was no good reason why, considering all the circumstances, enough persons should not be found in that part of the city, who would be willing to come together for united prayer and praise every day. They accordingly determined to introduce this change, but were anticipated on the day of the third

weekly meeting by a similar proposition made and carried in the meeting itself. The matter was then definitely adjusted, and it only remained to see how far the way was prepared by Providence for an attempt so novel and peculiar. For unless there had been some sort of preparation in the public mind, the call to mid-day prayer, however loud or urgent, would doubtless have fallen on heedless ears.

The result now clearly showed how wise had been the calculations of him who originated the meeting. The number of attendants, although fluctuating from day to day, yet, when considered at intervals of a few days or a week, was found to be constantly increasing. It was observed that very many of those who had the hour between twelve and one o'clock allowed them for the mid-day meal, were willing, or rather eager to appropriate at least a part of it to social worship. No difficulty was experienced in having the meeting sustained. Those who could not come one day would come the next; and those who could not conveniently give the whole hour, gave what they could. And although the coming and going during the hour was somewhat of an interruption, yet as it had been previously authorized, and was therefore to be expected, it occasioned far less confusion and disturbance than it would in a meeting of another kind.



CHAPTER V.

Character of the Meeting.

ON the eighth day of October, 1857, the place of meeting was transferred to the room below, on the second story of the Consistory building. This is the most agreeable apartment in the whole edifice, and the one which has always been used for the regular weekly lectures by the pastors of the Church, the others being usually appropriated to Sunday school or Bible class purposes. A sketch of its appearance at the present time is given in the accompanying plate.

From the above date to the present time, this room has been open for prayer at noon every secular day with one solitary exception,—the great holiday of New York, New Year's day. The only difference which other public days, such as Thanksgiving day, the 22nd of February, the Fourth of July, the day of the Atlantic Cable celebration have caused, has been to give direction to the current and object of prayer.

Nor has the character of the meeting been in any material point varied during this protracted period. The same general outline has been rigidly adhered to ; the object of those who had the direction of things being, on the one hand to maintain the freedom and latitude of the exercises ; and on the other, to guard against disorder, and prevent the single and spiritual character of the assembly from being perverted or lost from sight. At an early period certain directions were placed in manuscript under the eye of the leader, who was expected to conform to them himself and to require the same from all others. These were somewhat enlarged and made more precise from time to time as circumstances required. A copy of them as now in use, is subjoined on another page. The "rules overhead," referred to in the fourth direction, are contained in a framed placard hung upon the wall, of which the following is a *fac simile* :

**Brethren are earnestly
requested to adhere
to the 5 minute rule.**

HOWLAND ST.

PRAYERS & EXHORTATIONS
Not to exceed 5 minutes,
in order to give all an opportunity.

**NOT MORE than 2 CONSECUTIVE
PRAYERS OR EXHORTATIONS.**

NO CONTROVERTED POINTS
— DISCUSSED. —

PLEASE OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING RULES.

BE PROMPT.

COMMENCING PRECISELY AT TWELVE O'CLOCK.

The Leader is not expected to exceed ten minutes in opening the meeting

- 1st. Open the meeting by reading and singing from three to five verses of a hymn.
- 2d. Prayer.
- 3d. Read a portion of the Scripture.
- 4th. Say the meeting is now open for prayers and exhortations, observing particularly the rules overhead, inviting brethren from abroad to take part in the services.
- 5th. Read but one or two requests at a time—REQUIRING a prayer to follow—such prayer to have special reference to the same.
- 6th. In case of any suggestion or proposition by any person, say this is simply a Prayer meeting, and that they are out of order, and call on some brother to pray.
- 7th. Give out the closing hymn five minutes before one o'clock. Request the Benediction from a Clergyman, if one be present.

The "requests" mentioned in the 5th direction have reference to communications sent in to the meeting by different persons, desiring the prayers of the assembly for themselves or others. Of these more will be said in another place.

The 6th Rule was designed to prevent rash or ill-considered proposals, the adoption, or even consideration of which, would be alien to the design of the meeting and tend to distract the minds of those present. The deliberate judgment of the Committee of the Consistory, confirmed by considerable observation, led them to the conclusion that it would be unwise to allow any action to be taken or any discussions had, which would trench on the ground occupied by ecclesiastical judicatories, or change the meeting from its original character as a simple gathering for prayer and conference.

I. In relation to the general character of the exercises, the first and most distinguishing feature is what has been called their *Spontaneity*.

In a few instances, where the leader observes among the audience a person whom he knows or believes to be in possession of interesting information in relation to the work of God in any part of the country, he will call upon the brother to recount the facts to the assembly. But this does not occur often. In general the custom is to let the meeting conduct itself. After the opening, room is afforded to all without exception

to take part in such way as their feelings may prompt, whether to offer prayer, to give a word of exhortation, to narrate an interesting incident, to tell of the Lord's doings elsewhere, to prefer a request for the remembrance in prayer of some person or subject, or even to commence the singing of a few verses of some familiar hymn. It rarely happens that there is any delay, any awkward pause caused by one waiting for another. The difficulty, if such it be, lies in the opposite direction. Often two or three, or more, arise at the same time. In such cases the younger yield to the older, or the resident to the stranger, or the leader assigns the floor to the person whose claim seems the most urgent. Whatever difficulties may have embarrassed this matter at first, a usage was soon established by which the course of the meeting was made to flow on smoothly and sweetly to its termination. The spirit of Christian love seemed naturally to bring out a practical exemplification, in this as in other respects, of the Apostolic precept, In honour preferring one another.

A more serious difficulty to be apprehended from the liberty allowed to all to take part in the services, was the presumption that those least qualified by nature or culture to lead the devotions or thoughts of others, would for that very reason be forward to assume this position. Nor can it be denied that this has sometimes occurred. Exhortations have been

delivered which had nothing but fervour, and sometimes not even that, to recommend them ; and prayers have been offered so ambitious and rhetorical in style and tone as inevitably to make the impression that they were intended rather for the ears of men than for God's. But in general such departures from propriety have been few, and those who have been most regular or frequent in attendance upon the meetings, have been surprised to observe how little was positively objectionable in the effusions of a body of men so promiscuous in its origin, and so constantly changing in its individual members. On the other hand, it is to be considered that as there is no compulsion to speak, not the least obligation express or implied, no one rises unless he has or thinks he has something to say. And if he proves to have made a mistake, the shortness of the time allowed to each by the rules, prevents the infliction from being intolerable.

But even if these evils existed to a far greater degree than has yet been experienced, they would weigh but lightly against the advantages of the spontaneous feature. To throw the meeting open to all, destroys formality, promotes variety, awakens interest, keeps the attention roused, and ensures, as far as any human means can, a constant flow of life and fervour. No one meeting is or can be the exact counterpart of another. One day prayer will abound,

on the next exhortation will be prominent, the third will be characterized by some fervid appeal, a touching case of conversion will make a fourth memorable, and so on in continual succession. So manifold are the phases of the Christian life, so diversified the workings of the Divine Spirit, so abundant the ways in which eternal things affect the interests and feelings of men, that simple and single as is the object of the meeting, and rigidly as its general rules are enforced, there is perpetual freshness, variety and vitality in the exercises from day to day. This is doubtless largely owing to what may be mentioned as another prominent feature of the meeting; its

II. *Catholicity.* Although it has been from the beginning under the direction and control of the committee of the Consistory, a control never put forth prominently except when it was questioned or invaded, or when indiscreet propositions were brought forward, yet in like manner from the outset has the meeting been of the most comprehensive kind. Special pains were taken to divest it of anything of a denominational or partizan cast. The hymn books used have been those issued by one of the general benevolent institutions sustained and controlled by evangelical Christians of every name. The leaders, whether lay or clerical, have been taken indiscriminately from nearly every known body of Protestants "holding the Head," from Baptists, Con-

gregationalists, Friends, Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians of all the various branches, Reformed Dutch, &c. The assemblies have been composed of equally various materials. All were invited, and all were welcome. No man was asked to what regiment he belonged, or from what country he came. If he fought under the Captain of Salvation, and spoke the speech of Canaan, it was enough. There was room for him.

The harmony of believers, so different in their origin, name, associations, and systems of doctrine, order, and discipline, was secured by the enforcement of the rule—"No controverted points discussed." Sometimes, indeed, a good Methodist brother would drop a sentiment respecting human agency in conversion, which no Calvinist could possibly endorse, while the next day, a disciple of "the doctrines of grace" would bring out one of these with singular and hearty emphasis. But this was usually unpremeditated and involuntary; and as no discussion sprang up, the whole matter would quietly die away and the concord of the assembly remain unbroken. But in truth, during most of the year past, so intense has been the interest in those great central doctrines of the Gospel, which underlie all creeds having enough truth in them to save a soul, and so profound has been the concern to have Christ's Kingdom advanced, and men ready to perish snatched as "brands from the burn-

ing," that Christians were far more disposed to bring to mind and consider the points in which they agree than those in which they disagree. Themes of controversy were as if without an effort excluded from view. All, as might be expected of men willing to meet during business hours for prayer, concurred in the belief that men are lost by nature, that salvation is freely offered to them through the blood of the Cross, and that it is the province of the Holy Spirit to convert them to the believing reception of the gracious provision thus made. There was therefore a common want of the same great blessing for themselves and others, and a common conviction that it could come only from above.

This produced a great enlargement of Christian charity and brotherly love in prayer. Men were lifted above denominational divisions. Partizan views and selfish aspirations were absorbed in the overwhelming rush of feeling and desire for the honour of Christ and the salvation of perishing souls. They who at other times and in other places laboured only under the banner of the particular body of Christians to which they belonged, and were zealous to flaunt that banner in the face of all comers, here meekly folded it up, and were content to pray and sing and speak together, simply as Christians, sheep of one fold, disciples of one Master, heirs of one destiny. The progress of the Lord's cause, no matter in what

place, or by what instruments, or by whomsoever announced, was enough to call out their common sympathies, to occasion hearty thanks to God for his goodness and earnest pleadings for the continuance and enlargement of the blessing.

In this way the catholic spirit of the meeting has gone on, becoming more and more broad and cordial, until now no one seems to look for anything else at any time or from any quarter.

III. A third most noticeable feature in the character of the meeting is the *Presence of Strangers*.

As appears by the Rules quoted above, the appearance of such is desired and expected, and as is proper, a preference is given to them, if at any time they seek the attention of the meeting. Of course in a city like New York, the metropolis of the country and the chief seat of the importing trade, connected with the interior by innumerable ties and constantly drawing to itself visitors from every quarter, for purposes of business, travel and amusement, there cannot fail to be a perpetual succession of strangers, and among these many to whom the name of Jesus is precious. Besides the multitudes who make a longer or shorter stay in hotels and boarding houses, there are far greater numbers who, residing in some place in the surrounding country, at a distance ranging from five to a hundred miles, yet come into town daily, or at least two or three times a week for secu

lar pursuits. Many of these have made it a habit to resort to the Noon Meeting, as often as circumstances permitted. Clergymen on their way to and from ecclesiastical meetings, invalids travelling for health, sailors staying in port, officers of the army and navy *in transitu* from place to place, emigrants from foreign lands pursuing their way to the interior of this country, and adventurous men from the interior seeking the quickest route to the Pacific, all these, as they passed through New York, have to some extent been represented in this now well-known gathering.

Scarcely a day passes in which some voice is not lifted which was never heard before in that room. It may be that the speaker merely wishes to express his gratification at what he sees and hears, or to make some suggestion, or to propose a subject of prayer, or to narrate some recent manifestation of God's grace in the neighbourhood from which he comes. But in any of these cases, his presence is felt as a stimulus and encouragement by those present. Particularly is this the case, when as often occurs, the meeting is informed that the reports, whether verbal or in print, of what God has been pleased to do in the North Dutch Consistory room and similar places in New York, going out through the land, have wrought in some communities like a spark touching a whole train of combustibles. The Lord has seen fit to bless this simple and unostentatious means

to the reviving of his people, the awakening of impenitent souls and the general advancement of the Gospel. The echo of their own mercies thus coming back to the point of departure, renews the feeling of former joys, and the reâction is as powerful as it is happy.

IV. A fourth peculiarity of the meeting is its invariable *Promptness* as to time. Precisely at twelve o'clock, the leader takes his seat at the desk and commences the exercises. With equal exactness the meeting is closed when one hour has elapsed. Thus there is a sure barrier against prolixity. Besides the liberty which the visitor has of leaving at any moment, he is certain that if he chooses to remain during the whole service, he may rely upon being dismissed at the appointed time. This, together with the limited period which any one speaker is allowed to occupy, has a marked tendency to secure brevity and point in whatever is said. The meeting is exactly adapted to the class for whom it was originally intended—business men. While there is no irreverence, there is a promptness, an earnestness, a directness, which allow no dragging, and show that men have come together for a purpose, and mean, with God's blessing, to accomplish that purpose. It very often has happened that the interest of a meeting has gone on increasing up to the completion of the hour and some have greatly desired to prolong the exercises, but this is never

done, except so far as to allow the brother who has the floor to finish what he is saying. It is felt that if the rule were once deliberately disregarded, there would be no safeguard against a wearisome and ruinous protraction of the service. The leader therefore is required to be inexorable. And the knowledge of this fact is not without a wholesome influence upon all concerned. The most of the speakers come at once to the point, and put what they have to say into the fewest words possible.

V. We may add to the features already mentioned one more, viz: that which is derived from the one great, original, fundamental object of the meeting—**PRAYER.**

Its name imports, and every body understands, that this is primarily a Prayer Meeting. Devotion is literally its *sine qua non*. But for the felt necessity of Divine influence to be sought and obtained by prayer, the meeting never would have been instituted, or if instituted, never would have been sustained. All other things are subordinated to this, as they ought to be. Nor is it found that this lessens the interest or attractiveness any more than it does the usefulness of the services. All men cannot speak to edification, but all men can pray so as to carry their fellow-worshippers with them. If only their hearts are warm with love, if they feel the wants they express, if they speak as if to a God upon whom they wholly depend, and in

whose promise they entirely believe, no defects of expression or utterance will prevent their supplications from being enlivening to their brethren as well as acceptable to God.

This is not speculation, but the teaching of experience. Uniformly the most happy meetings, those which are longest remembered and are most fruitful of present and future good, are those in which there has been most prayer offered. While a contrary course in any given case has produced sore disappointment. See, for example, what was said on one occasion of this kind.

"A wet blanket on the Prayer Meeting," said a business man when the meeting was over. "A wet blanket it was," said another. "It so dampened the ardour of the meeting," said a third. "It was lifted off from us towards the close of the meeting, and we ought to be thankful for that," said a fourth.

"What was the wet blanket?" some one may ask. The leader had opened the meeting with rather long exercises, occupying seventeen or eighteen minutes, whereas the rule says he may occupy ten. Then he read several very interesting requests for prayer. Then followed remarks by two brethren, occupying seventeen or eighteen minutes more before any prayer was offered. These remarks were interesting in their place but out of time. The feelings of the meeting were moved with deep sympathy for those who had

presented these requests for prayer as well as with the subjects for prayer. This coming to talk instead of coming to pray was the wet blanket.

This has been so well understood now that all experienced leaders make it a point to secure as much speaking to God as possible, rather than speaking to man; no matter how able, eloquent, zealous or moving. The life, the glory, the blessedness of the Noon Prayer Meeting lies in its close adherence to the idea implied in its name.

This matter was put forth in a very emphatic and appropriate form by the Senior Pastor of the Collegiate Church, the REV. DR. DE WITT, at a meeting in September, in some remarks, the occasion of which is shown in the remarks themselves.

"It will be remembered that at the close of the meeting yesterday, there was committed to a Committee of which I was the Chairman, a *prayer* of a very important character, in regard to the subject matter of which there can be no division of sentiment or opinion. That prayer was to this effect—that this union Prayer Meeting most earnestly request the ecclesiastical and missionary boards of all denominations of Christians throughout the country and in other lands, at their fall meetings, to set apart a day during their sessions to be spent as a day of special prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the revival of the work of God in all our churches of every de-

nomination of Christians, that millions ready to perish might be saved. At the meeting, yesterday, I stated that on Saturday last, I received a letter from the Rev. Dr. Plumer, of the Western Theological Seminary at Pittsburgh, saying that their Western Synods were anxious to observe such a day, and asking me if some concert of action could not be secured to the same effect in that branch of the Church with which I am more particularly connected. When that paper was presented as a call to prayer, it struck me favourably, and without much reflection was presented to the meeting. The paper was received, though a small minority was opposed; and opposed, not because of the spirit of the paper, but because this was not felt to be the fitting place even to vote to recommend a day of prayer, because we come here *simply* to pray, not to do any business, even so much as to say Aye or Nay to such a paper as this. The mover of that paper has withdrawn it, and the object can be reached in another way, and it will be a way liable to no objection. Moreover, I have to say, this being a union Prayer Meeting of different denominations of Christians, if there were the smallest minority opposed, I should feel opposed too. I have also another thing to say. Identified as I have been from the beginning, by my peculiar relations, with this Prayer Meeting, my judgment tells me, it is better to reach this object, so desirable, in another way. What is

the Fulton street prayer meeting more than any other prayer meeting? I confess, when I hear the brother from St. Louis and the brother from Philadelphia tell how all look to this meeting, and how much is depending on this meeting, I feel humbled. We have need to remember that in all this great work of salvation in which we have been called to rejoice, the Lord alone is to be exalted. Therefore let us keep humble before him. We trust that the spirit of grace and supplication will be given to those assemblies of Christians which are to meet. But as they are ecclesiastical bodies of various sorts of Christians, this object should reach them through a channel more appropriate than this meeting. And it will be done, it is to be presumed; and all that was intended be accomplished, though it will be through another channel."

Perhaps a stranger will get a better conception of the character of the meetings by a faithful report of one as a specimen. With such a report this chapter will conclude.

"We take our seat in the middle room, ten minutes before 12 o'clock, M. A few ladies are seated in one corner, and a few business-men are scattered here and there through the room. Five minutes to 12 the room begins to fill up rapidly. Two minutes to 12, the leader passes in, and takes his seat in the desk or pulpit. At 12, M., punctual to the moment, at the first

stroke of the clock the leader rises and commences the meeting by reading two or three verses of the hymn,

“ ‘Salvation, oh ! the joyful sound,
’Tis pleasure to our ears;
A sovereign balm for every wound,
A cordial for our fears.’

“Each person finds a hymn-book in his seat ; all sing with heart and voice. The leader offers a prayer, short pointed, to the purpose. Then reads a brief portion of Scripture. Ten minutes are now gone. Meantime, requests in sealed envelopes have been going up to the desk for prayer. Every nook and corner is filled—the doorways and stairways—and the upper room is now filled, and we hear the voice of singing.

“A deep, solemn silence settles down upon our meeting. It is holy ground. The leader stands with slips of paper in his hand.

“He says : ‘This meeting is now open for prayer. Brethren from a distance are specially invited to take part. All will observe the rules.’

“All is now breathless attention. A tender solicitude spreads over all those upturned faces.

“The chairman reads : ‘A son in North Carolina desires the fervent, effectual prayers of the righteous of this congregation for the immediate conversion of his mother in Connecticut.’

“In an instant a father rises : ‘I wish to ask the

prayers of this meeting for two sons and a daughter.' And he sits down and bursts into tears, and lays his head down on the railing of the seat before him, and sobs like a broken-hearted child. We say in our heart, 'Oh, heart-stricken parent! do you not know that these children are close by the kingdom?'

"A brother rises and pours out all his heart in prayer for that 'mother,' for those 'two sons,' and that 'daughter.'

"A few remarks follow—very brief. The chairman rises with slips of paper in his hand, and reads: 'A praying sister requests prayers for two unconverted brothers in the city of Detroit; that they be converted, and become the true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.'

"Another 'Prayers are requested of the people of God for a young man, once a professor of religion, but now a wanderer, and going astray. These Christian parents invoke a continued interest in your prayers.'

"And another, from West Cornwall, Vt. 'Believing in the power and efficacy of prayer, an aged widowed mother requests the prayers of those Christians who assemble for daily prayer, for the immediate conversion of two sons, that they may become the meek and humble followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. A sick daughter sincerely unites with her in this earnest request.' Two prayers in succession fol-

lowed these requests—very fervent, very earnest. And others who rose to pray at the same time, sat down again when they found themselves preceded by the voices already engaged in prayer. Then arose from all hearts that beautiful hymn, sung with touching pathos, so appropriate, too, just in this stage of this meeting, with all these cases full before us,

“ ‘There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.’

“Then followed prayer by one who prays earnestly for all who have been prayed for, for all sinners present, for the perishing thousands in this city, for the spread of revivals all over the land and world.

“It is now a quarter to one o’clock. Time has fled on silver wings.

“The Chairman rises again with still more slips in in his hand, and reads :

“ ‘A resident of Georgia requests the prayers of this meeting for two dear brothers, that they may be brought to Christ in this day of salvation ; one residing near this meeting, and the other three thousand miles away from the home of his childhood. Also, for a dear and only child.’

“O ! that mother, that mother—and all these mothers—shall they not see all these children converted ?

“Again he reads, and this, like others, was very affecting:

“‘May I, without presumption, prefer a request for myself, though only a private individual, and for a feeble church among whom my lot is cast, that we may be melted and humbled, and endued with power from on high, and made instruments of salvation—establish His kingdom with power, and exalt His throne in the midst of us. ‘Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, Oh, thou Most Mighty!’

“‘I would beg leave to prefer the same request for all the churches, some thirty in number, connected with this Presbytery, being among the few reported at the late General Assembly wholly unvisited with the showers of grace. The request will not be considered out of season. ‘My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath,’ so says one of our oldest ministers.’

“This was understood to be a Presbytery in Virginia. Many eyes filled with tears when this request was read. And who will soon forget the prayer that followed for those unvisited churches and that humble petitioner.

“Then there arose a sailor, now one no more, by reason of ill-health, but daily labouring for sailors. He was converted on board a man-of-war, and he knew how hard it was for the converted sailor to stand up firm against the storm of jeers, and re-

proaches, and taunts of a ship's crew. 'Now I am here,' he said, 'to represent one who has requested me to ask your prayers for a converted sailor, this day gone to sea. I parted from him a little time ago, and *his fear* is, his *great fear*, that he may dishonor the cause of the blessed Redeemer. Will you pray for this sailor?' Prayer was offered for his keeping and guidance.

"Then came the closing hymn, the benediction, and the parting for twenty-four hours."

THE NOONDAY PRAYER MEETING.

A Hymn by a daughter of Lucius Hart; often sung in the meetings.

TUNE—*The Golden Rule.*

From busy toil and heavy care

We turn the weary mind,

And in the place of noontide prayer

Our sanctuary find.

The midday hour, the noontide hour,

It is the hour of prayer;

Our souls receive renewing power,

For Jesus meets us there.

The voice that stilled the stormy waves

On distant Galilee,

Speaks once again, and at the sound

Retires another sea.

The midday hour, etc.

"The restless waves of care and strife
Obey the mighty voice;
Peace broods the quiet waters o'er,
And all our souls rejoice.
The midday hour, etc.

"These heaven-bright hours too soon are past;
Grant, Lord, this greater boon :
A place where worship never ends,
Nor night succeeds to noon.
The midday hour, etc."

CHAPTER VI.

The Progress of the Meeting.

DURING the closing months of the year 1857, this was slow but sure. The general interruption of business in consequence of the financial disasters of the season, gave to many an opportunity of regularly attending the meeting, of which a more prosperous season would perhaps have deprived them. Others were drawn by curiosity, and before they were aware, became interested in the service, and were induced to attend again and again. But it can scarcely be doubted that the main cause of the general popularity of the meeting was the gracious purpose of the Lord, making use, in His adorable sovereignty, of this means to alleviate the gloom of temporal calamities, and lead the minds of the children of men to higher ends than "The meat that perisheth." In no other way can we account for the eagerness with which multitudes of men would flock together at an unusual, and to many most incon-

venient hour, for purposes of worship, to a place where there were none of the attractions which alone, in ordinary circumstances, move men in masses to attend a religious service. There was no eloquent orator, no noted revivalist, no display of intellectual abilities, native or acquired ; nothing to gratify a refined taste, or stimulate a jaded imagination, or cater to itching ears. It was simply a gathering of men who turned aside from secular cares to consecrate an hour to prayer or praise—an assembly in which the chief part was taken by laymen, and these, persons not distinguished for any unusual gifts or culture.

Yet the attraction to this unpretending service became wide-spread and irresistible. Men of all ages, classes and characters attended. Mere lads and men of hoary heads sat side by side on the same benches. Lawyers and physicians, merchants and clerks, bankers and brokers, manufacturers and mechanics, carmen and hod-carriers, butchers and bakers, and porters and messengers, were represented from day to day. They came just as they were from their secular avocations, and entered with zest into the spirit of the occasion. Often carmen in their frocks would drive up to the curb-stone, and securing their horses, enter the meeting, and remaining long enough to join in a song of praise or fervent prayer, then pass out to their teams and drive off to



John Knox

REPRODUCTION DONATED BY THE CALDWELL CHURCH

their work. The other sex began also to feel the common impulse. At first the entire company was made up of men, and the swell of so many male voices singing lustily the songs of Zion was like the sound of many waters. But after a time ladies began to drop in one by one, and soon there came to be an average attendance of about fifty—a portion of the house being set apart for them—and the singing, with their voices intermingled, became softer and more like the praise of an ordinary worshipping assembly.

A mournful event which happened at this time, added greatly to the growing seriousness in the community. This was the unexpected death on the 6th of January, of the Rev. John Knox, D. D., with two exceptions the oldest settled pastor in the city, and a man universally known and venerated and beloved. Prostrated by a headlong fall from the rear piazza of his own residence, the exact cause of which is and ever will be a mystery, he lay in unconsciousness for some days, and then his spirit entered the heavenly rest. The shock of his sudden departure from full health and active usefulness to the silent tomb, affected the public mind very deeply, as was shown by his extraordinary funeral—a funeral attended by such general and heart-felt demonstrations of grief and respect as never before had been paid to the memory of a man in a private station. He had often,

as senior pastor of the Collegiate Church, presided at the Noon Meeting in the Consistory building. While he lay unconscious at his house after the fatal injury, his case was fervently commended to the Lord by many a suppliant within the walls where he had so often ministered ; and we may well believe that somewhat of the throng who thus crowded to the lecture room at the hour of prayer, was owing to the profound impression which this good man's end had produced.

In the month of January the attendance increased so largely that the room on the ground floor was opened, and a meeting was carried on there, simultaneously with the one on the floor above. By the early part of the following month, the place again became too strait, and the room in the third story, in which the first meeting had been held some six months before, was thrown open to the crowd. This also was immediately filled. It was not uncommon at that time for all the rooms, with the halls and stairways leading to them, to be filled to repletion ; these meetings under as many different leaders being carried on at the same time under one roof. Some desired to have the church made the place of meeting for all ; but the Committee of the Consistory wisely judged otherwise. By retaining the existing arrangement, they preserved the sacred and tender associations already formed with the Consistory building ; they

avoided the difficulty of being heard sure to beset laymen unaccustomed to speak in public whenever they attempt to fill a large edifice; and further, they furnished occasion to many more to take part in the services than could possibly have done so, were all collected in a single apartment.

About this time the daily press of the city had its attention drawn to a topic now become one of universal interest. Reporters were despatched to the various prayer meetings, and "the Progress of the Revival" became a standing head of intelligence in several widely circulated journals. Remarkable cases of awakening were detailed at length, and all items of religious information were eagerly seized to gratify the presumed demands of readers. In some aspects of the case judicious men regretted this as tending to create and feed a factitious excitement, to withdraw men's minds from the serious consideration of their own state before God to outward matters, and to foster that very cry, "Lo, here is Christ, or lo, he is there," against which our Lord solemnly warned his disciples. The direct effect of such a clamour is to lead men unconsciously to the notion that piety is a thing to be talked about or speculated upon, instead of a thing of immediate personal concernment, the vital interest, the present urgent duty of every rational being. Yet no one can doubt that these articles enlisted the attention of many who

otherwise might have remained in total ignorance of the work God was doing. Some were induced to attend the meetings, of which they saw from day to day wonderful reports, and to a portion at least of these the final result was a blessed one.

One immediate consequence of the overflow of attendants upon the North Church meetings was the institution of various others of the same character in different parts of the city, under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association, or of some older laymen, or of an association of pastors in a single neighbourhood. At one time in the early spring the number of these meetings exceeded twenty, and all were well attended, some being crowded. Still the interest attached to the original place of prayer continued undiminished. The class for whom it was especially designed—men in active business—found it convenient to resort thither, and the Lord was pleased to manifest his gracious presence as of old. Occasionally some poor waif of humanity, some life-long stranger to serious things would wander in among the worshippers, and be arrested by the truth. The prodigal's return was not only hailed with joy and thanksgiving, but proved a new incitement to zeal in effort and persistency in prayer.

Soon after this, when noon meetings had been instituted and were largely attended in all the principal cities, the custom was introduced of exchanging dis-

patches with each other by magnetic telegraph. One of these, received from Philadelphia, is inserted as an illustration.

“PHILADELPHIA, Saturday, March 18, 12.15 P. M.

“To Mr. W. Wetmore, Fulton street Meeting:

“Jayne’s Hall Daily Prayer Meeting is crowded, upwards of three thousand present; with one mind and heart they glorify our Father in heaven, for the mighty work he is doing in our city and country in the building up of saints and the conversion of sinners. The Lord hath done great things for us, whence joy to us is brought. May he who holds the seven stars in his right hand, and who walks in the midst of the churches, be with you by his Spirit this day.

“Grace, mercy, and peace be with you.

“GEO. H. STUART, *Chairman of Meeting.*”

A suitable reply was transmitted.

As the warm season came on, and the citizens began to leave town for the usual places of summer resort, the attendance became less numerous, but, not less earnest and cordial. Indeed the tokens of the Divine favour had been so clear and abundant that it was felt that the meeting was no longer an experiment, or a provisional arrangement, but an approved instrument in the Lord’s hands of doing good, and little less than a necessity in this great city. Accordingly,

it was determined to state in an official and positive way the permanency of the institution. Many of the numerous meetings of a similar character which had been established in different parts of the city, were for various reasons discontinued; and the inquiry was frequently made whether a like course would be pursued in relation to this, the original one. There was the less difficulty in answering this question in the negative, because the Noon gathering in the Consistory building had been well attended long before any general and wide-spread interest in religious things had been observed in the city at large, and the presumption was that it would continue to be properly sustained, even after this interest had declined. Early in the month of May therefore, a placard of which a representation is found on the lower half of the opposite page was hung upon the wall of the second story room. The placard immediately above it was suspended at an earlier period for the object which its contents indicate.

To Prevent confusion
Please fill the seats,
in order to make room
for those coming in.

— THIS —
DAILY PRAYER MEETING,
from 12 to 1 o'Clock,
[COMMENCED SEPT^R 23^d 1857]
is intended to be a
PERMANENT INSTITUTION.

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath.
The Christian's native air;
His watch-word at the gates of death
He enters heaven with prayer."

"Him that cometh to me I will in no-wise cast out."

To the text inscribed at the bottom of this placard, a gentleman, some months afterward, made this beautiful allusion

"I came here not intending to say a word. But as I came in I saw before me on the wall that memorable passage;" pointing with his finger at it, "'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.'

"It reminds me of another place, and another scene. I asked a young girl if she loved the Bible. I did not know she was a Christian. She answered, 'Yes, I hope I love the Bible.'

"'Is there any one part or passage that you love more than another?'

"'I love all the Bible; but if I may be permitted I must say that there is one passage more precious than any other.'

"'What is that?'

"'It is this: 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.'

"Look there," said the speaker, pointing to the wall, "a whole sermon is in that single passage. Cast yourself, my fellow sinner, upon that precious promise, and you are saved forever."

It is a very remarkable fact that although there was a sensible decline in the numbers of attendants during the warm summer months, yet that it was precisely during this period that the most extraordinary instances of conversion occurred, as will afterwards

appear. And those whose situation enabled them to continue the assembling of themselves together found that God was with them of a truth, and were enabled to rejoice in many precious seasons of communion before the Mercy Seat.

We subjoin some notices of the proceedings from time to time. Here, for example, are extracts from the reports for three successive days in the month of August.

At the meeting of August 4, the Revs. Prof. Gibson and Mr. McClure, delegated from the Presbyterian Synod of Ireland to a corresponding body in America were present, and presented Christian salutations. Prof. Gibson after expressing his pleasure in being present at such a meeting said,

“We have just landed from the Persia; and our first desire was to get into this prayer meeting. We come from the Presbyterian Synod of Ireland, and one of our great objects in coming to this country is to witness for ourselves and gather up the facts of this great revival with which the Lord is blessing you in America.

“We have heard much of this great revival in Ireland. We have connected with our Synod five hundred churches and congregations. And we have a strong desire that the same gracious dispensation which has blessed you here might be bestowed upon all our Churches at home. At the last meeting of our

ecclesiastical body, we set apart a day for special prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon us also, and great numbers met with us at the place of prayer. We felt that we had given great prominence to the cardinal truth of salvation by the sacrifice and atoning blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We may have thought too little, and given too little prominence to the convincing, regenerating, and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

"We desire an interest in all your prayers for a blessing upon the Churches of our land."

The Rev. Mr. McClure, the other delegate, greeted the meeting in the most cordial manner. He said they were not ignorant of what the Lord is doing in this country. He was fully satisfied as were all in his own land that this was the genuine work of the Holy Spirit. "We believe no human agency can produce such a work as this. We have been most happy that no dependance is placed upon instrumentalities. It is not by the preaching of evangelists and revivalists, but by supplication and prayer, that this is shed forth, which we see and of which we hear. We trust it is the dawn of a better day for the world. The kingdom of Great Britain has a vital interest in showing this work, and I join in the request most heartily, that you will pray that this work of grace may reach us also, as we trust and hope it will."

The next day when the usual invitation was given

to strangers who might be present, to take part in the exercises, a gentleman arose and said,

“No one here has ever seen me before, and yet I am not a stranger. Here are my brethren—my sisters—my fellow Christians—all members of the same great family of Christ. I came from India, and I landed but yesterday. I have come all the way from that far distant land to see for myself what the Lord is doing in America. I am an Englishman by birth, but my home is in India. We have heard of the glorious outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon your Churches, and we have rejoiced at it with exceeding joy. We believe as you believe, that we stand in the first breaking light of a most eventful day—an era of greater displays of Divine grace in the salvation of sinners than the world has ever seen. We need faith that is equal to the times. We need confidence to ask great things of God, and we shall get great things. Ask little things, and we shall get little things. But ask mighty showers of grace, and they will be poured out like a flood upon us.’

The following day, August 6, the Rev. W. J. R. Taylor, of Philadelphia, in the course of some striking remarks suggested by the recent laying of the Atlantic Cable, related the following :

“Some of you, perhaps, have heard of the conversion of a soldier in India through the influence of the telegraph. He was lying near death, and within the

confines of the eternal world, when the truths of the Bible, which he had long ridiculed and despised, came rushing upon his soul. But what should he do to be saved? No Christian friend was nigh; but he bethought himself of a Christian man with whom he was acquainted, but who was sixty miles distant. He instantly sent him a telegraph message, as follows: 'I am near death; what shall I do to be saved?' The Christian man went to the telegraph station, and sent a message back to him thus: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved.' And so the message kept passing from the dying man unto the living Christian until the physical powers of the soldier failed, and he died with the words of joy and peace upon his lips. Who knows that we may not live to see the same glorious message pass over these wires, and that the prayer of the inventor shall be fully answered, and that the joyful response of nation to nation shall be heard—millions on foreign shores singing the everlasting song of salvation to our God."

Soon after the Queen's Message to the President by the Atlantic Telegraph had been received, a Committee was appointed to prepare a message to the London Union Prayer Meeting, to be sent by the same medium. As it was found that there would be considerable delay in opening the line for despatches, it was concluded by the Committee to forward their con-

gratulations by mail. The next steamer took out the following:

“To the Brethren in Attendance on the Young Men’s Christian Association Prayer Meeting, London.

“A noon-day prayer meeting was commenced in the city of New York on the 23d of September last, in the Consistory rooms of the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church in Fulton street, particularly designed for business men. It soon arrested attention, and proved the commencement of a deepened and united spirit of prayer, which has gradually and widely spread throughout the whole land. At the meeting on the 16th inst., the day on which the Queen’s Message was received, showing the successful laying of the Submarine Telegraph, that great event was made the leading topic in the remarks and prayers, and a peculiar interest was imparted. The undersigned were appointed a Committee to prepare and send by this wonderful instrument a brief message of congratulation to you and other Christian friends in Great Britain on this event, so replete with promise of the richest blessings not only to our two countries, so closely allied, but to the whole world in connection with the cause of Christ. Subsequently, however, to the appointment of the Committee, it was announced that the Telegraph would not be open to the public till the first of September, and the number of messages al-

ready at the station might delay our own to a still later period: it was thought best, therefore, not to delay, but to send our congratulations on this auspicious event at once, by an Ocean steamer. And now, while we speak with gratitude of the present deepening and expanding spirit of prayer, and of the increase of Christian effort among us at this time, we do cordially invite you to unite with us in the doxology already quoted in connection with this event, '*Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will to men.*'

"It was deemed proper that this communication should emanate from the Fulton street Prayer Meeting; but it expresses the feelings of the heart of many thousands throughout our whole country. We should be happy to hear from you either by an early, short telegraphic dispatch, (for there is no more sea, time or space,) or by mail.

"Yours in bonds of Christian love,

THOMAS DE WITT,
JOHN MARSH,
A. R. WETMORE,
EDWARD CORNING,
J. C. LANPHIER,
HORACE HOLDEN,

} Committee.

"New-York, Aug. 20, 1858."

The day of the celebration of the laying of the Atlantic Cable was thus observed:

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 1.—This was the great celebration day—such a day for excitement and parade as New York rarely saw before. Many seemed to fear that the meeting would be neglected in order to witness the outside display. But it was not so to be, that the place of prayer should be deserted. It was just as full as ever, and if possible, more interesting than ever. The laying of the Atlantic Telegraph Cable had no place in the regards of the meeting, and matters which make heaven rejoice, and saints and angels shout aloud with gladness, occupied the attention.

A beloved brother in the ministry said: "What a blessed thing that we may meet here to pray for the conversion of souls. The greatest event that ever takes place in all the dominions of Jehovah, is the conversion of a sinner to God. What a change that is! How it changes a man's hopes, aims, desires, destiny! When a poor sinner is made a new creature in Christ Jesus, heaven cannot keep silence over it. There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. All heaven rings with jubilee and songs of praise over him. What an excitement among the ranks of the shining host! To-day, all New-York is excitement over one of the greatest of the achievements of science, in this, or any other age. But heaven cares nothing about it. All around us are full of joy, and thousands on thousands

will to-day be engaged in a most magnificent demonstration. But not a note of joy will be struck in heaven on account of the cause of this general rejoicing on earth.

“But here in this room, in this Prayer Meeting, we have to do with matters to which all in heaven are alive with most intense interest. Our errand here is connected with the conversion of the sinner. We come to plead with God for this. The whole world beside cannot present such an object. All created things cannot compare with this new creation. And while our streets are filled with thousands admiring a wonderful event, how much higher the object which we have in view in this gathering in this upper room, this place of prayer. It is an unspeakable mercy bestowed when God will convert a sinner from the error of his ways. The conversion of a poor sinner ‘at the lamp post’ is an event of mercy and grace such as fills all heaven with praise.”

On the 10th of September, the Rev. Dr. De Witt, having been called on to offer prayer, preceded his prayer with the following just and seasonable observations.

“When this meeting was established we had no idea into what it would grow, nor what use the Holy Spirit would make of it in the building up of the kingdom of our dear Redeemer. When the winter was past and the summer was near, it was a question,

Would this revival continue through the summer? Would these daily Prayer Meetings continue to be marked by the Spirit's power? And when the summer heats commenced and men fled from the city, it was a question, Would these meetings be sustained and the numbers kept up?

“The summer is over and men are coming back to the city; and how happy and unspeakably blessed it is to know that these Prayer Meetings have been kept up; that they have been full from day to day, and that at no point in their history was the interest wider, deeper, than it is at this very hour. God is with us of a truth. His Spirit hovers over us, and when his enemies come in like a flood, He lifts up a standard against them. No one can doubt the character of this work of grace going on in the midst of us. The right hand of amazing, Divine power is sure in all this.

“Now another question arises, ‘Shall this blessed influence be extended to all the churches of this city!’ That is now the great question. We are opening our churches anew, our pastors and our members are returning; our Prayer Meetings in the churches and our congregations have been *invaded* by absence. As they fill up again—shall this revival be extended to them. This subject has occupied many of my thoughts of late. I have pondered over it when I have been alone. I need not say how desira-

ble this may be. I have one request to make—that you make it a subject of prayer, that this work of the Spirit may be extended to all the churches of this city. Thus most effectually will you influence all the churches of our beloved country. Thus will you reach out your hand and leave it most successfully and impressively on the main spring of all action, the *heart* of the churches. There are indications that God has a wonderful work to accomplish, and that the day of its accomplishment is just at hand. With animation and hope we recognize these indications. Pray then for the churches of the city. Thus much I must say, I would not say less.” He then led in prayer.

The Rev. Dr. Leland, of South Carolina, being recognized in the meeting, was called upon for some remarks. “With great desire,” said he, “have I longed to plant my feet upon this hallowed spot and meet with my dear brethren in this room—a place more honoured than the palace of any earthly monarch on the face of the earth. I greet my brethren here with a tide of emotion, called forth by a remembrance of all the glorious past, and all the merciful present.

“This place of prayer I remember has been the birth place of many souls and the gate of heaven to many ready to perish. The Lord has exalted his own name in the midst of you. And the very displays of

God's mercy are calculated to fill our hearts with humility as well as rejoicing."

On the 23rd of September the Anniversary of the meeting was held, a full report of which will be found in Chapter XIII.

Here we conclude the account of the Progress of the Meeting. At the time this volume is sent to the press, the two rooms on the first and second floors of the Consistory building are still from day to day well filled and sometimes crowded. Strangers and citizens resort to the well known place. Earnest Christians find it a sort of second home, and awakened sinners gravitate thither by a kind of natural law, as to the place where in the interval of services in their own churches, they may most surely look for the help and guidance suited to their case. The Lord grant it may ever continue to be so!

THE MIDDAY PRAYER MEETING

From the pen of Mrs. Phœbe H. Brown, author of the favourite hymn, "I love to steal awhile away."

TUNE—*Ortenville.*

Jesus, this midday hour of prayer

We consecrate to *thee*,

Forgetful of each earthly care,

We would thy glory see.

We come thy presence to implore;
O teach us how to pray!
Impart to us thy Spirit's power,
Thy saving grace display.

Baptize with energy Divine
The contrite soul afresh;
O bow the stubborn will to thine,
And give the heart of flesh.

Unite our hearts, unite our tongues,
In lofty praise to thee,
Accept the tribute of our songs
Thou Holy One in Three.

CHAPTER VII.

The Globe Hotel Meeting.

ALLUSION has been made to various meetings for prayer, instituted and maintained after the pattern of the original one, with greater or less constancy and success, in other parts of the city. It does not fall within the design of this work to notice these particularly. But one of them is deserving of especial notice as being a direct branch of the parent meeting, and a part of the missionary operations of the North Dutch Church. This is the Globe Hotel Meeting.

In 1767, the German Lutherans of New York erected a substantial stone edifice on the corner of Frankfort and William streets, which was long occupied by them and known as the "Swamp Church." In 1831 the building passed into the hands of the colored Presbyterians, by whom, several years after, it was sold to parties who converted it, first into a livery stable, and then into an auction room. Six

years ago the old structure was removed, and a large public house erected, called the Globe Hotel. This hotel during the former part of the present year was in the charge of Miss St. J——. This lady, having made advances to a former lessor who became unfortunate, was obliged, in order to indemnify herself, to become the landlady. She undertook the work in the hope of doing good by it, through the distribution of Bibles and tracts, and in other ways exerting a religious influence. But she found it easier to sink to the level of her lodgers than to raise them to her own, and ere long had reason to mourn over the decline, if not the decay, of her own Christian faith and hope. But it pleased God to revive and restore her soul during the gracious effusions of the last winter and spring. With this spiritual recovery came back the desire to be useful to the inmates of the Hotel, many of whom greatly needed such efforts. For although she and her house were both most respectable, yet as a cheap lodging house open to all who behaved orderly while in it, it contained many of those who in the old world are called “the dangerous classes,” and here are usually the neglected classes.

The proprietress refused to let her bar room for the liquor business, although offered \$800 a year for the privilege. At the suggestion of Mr. Lanphier, she fitted up the room very comfortably, and opened

it every Thursday evening for a free Prayer Meeting, designed for the residents in that vicinity. who were told that now they had a meeting just at their doors. and one which they might attend in their plainest and most ordinary clothing. The meetings were commenced on the 1st day of July, when the Rev. Mr. St. John presided, and the Rev. Dr. Carpenter, of Brooklyn, and Geo. H. Stuart, of Philadelphia, as well as others, took part. Subsequent meetings were held every week until the end of September, when the state of her health compelling the excellent lady who controlled the Hotel to relinquish the business, the property passed into other hands, and the room was no longer attainable for religious purposes.

. But the record of these thirteen weekly meetings is on high. All of them were well attended by the class for whom they were designed. Precious seasons of Divine favour were enjoyed, and many will look back from eternity with grateful joy to the Thursday evening exercises at the *Globe Hotel*. We give in detail three of the interesting displays of Divine grace arising from or connected with this meeting. It may well be doubted whether throughout the long period during which an evangelical church stood upon that ground, there were witnessed any more signal manifestations of the Lord's power and goodness than those, the recital of which thrilled the assemblies

gathered in the metamorphosed bar room of the huge lodging house.

THE MAN WHO FOUND CHRIST AT THE LAMP POST.

This deeply interesting case belongs here, because although the man regularly attended the Noon meeting, yet it was one of the evening services at the Globe Hotel which seems to have been the immediate means of leading him to the Saviour.

In the early part of the month of August, a man was seen walking back and forth on the sidewalk, in front of the North Dutch Church, while the Prayer Meeting was going on. He was dressed in the very plainest attire, with a pea-jacket hanging on his arm. His countenance bore the very legible characteristics of a "hard case." After walking for some time, he paused, and coming up the steps to the second story lecture room, said to the lay Missionary at the door, whose daily care it is to see that those who come get comfortable seats,

"Will you let such a miserable-looking object as I am have a seat in your Prayer Meeting?"

"Certainly we will," was the reply, "and we are very glad to have you come."

He went in. Daily, for several weeks, he attended the meeting. He had been a man of very intemperate habits. He left off the use of intoxicating drinks at once. He became interested in the subject of reli-

gion; and the more he came the more interested he appeared. After four weeks of total abstinence, he signed the temperance pledge, and kept it. He grew more neat in his dress; his clothing was washed clean, though no man would have given fifty cents for all he had on. He often was without food, having no employment. But Providence seemed to make special provision that he should not suffer with hunger. In several instances he found small packages of meat and bread wrapped in paper as he was walking the streets. In other cases, small sums of money were given him, though never at the Prayer Meeting.

His convictions became more deep and pungent. He had a very sad expression on his face. He was often conversed with—often urged to repentance—often invited to come to Christ. But still he held back. One evening he went to Washington market to lodge. He had been that evening to the prayer meeting at the Globe Hotel, where he had been spoken to on the duty of immediately yielding to the claims of the Lord Jesus. His distress kept all the time increasing. At two o'clock in the morning he betook himself to the streets to see if he could not feel better by walking. His sins lay like a heavy burden on his soul. He could not find the Saviour. He walked and walked, and no relief came. At length he stopped at a lamp post, and reaching out his hands, grasped it. He bowed his head upon his

arm, and poured out his heart to the Saviour of sinners, and Christ revealed himself to this poor, miserable man. The burden of sin was gone; and tears of penitence and joy flowed apace.

How long he remained in this position at the lamp post he does not know. He walked the streets during the remainder of the night, his whole soul filled with joy. As the day dawned, he longed to meet some one to whom he could tell his new experience. He went to various places, but could find no person whom he knew. Early in the morning he went to the Battery, and sat down on the grass. He took a small New Testament from his pocket, and began to read. He was reading the Saviour's own words, and as he read shed tears which he could not restrain. At length a gentleman who had stood silently observing him, said:

"My friend, what little book are you reading?"

"I am reading the New Testament."

"Where did you get it?"

"It was given me at the Fulton street prayer meeting."

"Do you attend the Fulton street prayer meetings?"

"I do. I attend them every day."

"Do they do you any good?"

"Well, I hope they have done me great good. I hope I have found the Saviour."

And then, in his perfectly artless and simple, earn-

est manner, he narrated the story of the preceding night.

"Well," said the listener, "I have heard much of the Fulton street meetings; I believe they are doing a world of good. Now I will tell you what I want. At ten o'clock to-morrow, I want you to come to my store." And he gave him the name and number in Broad street. They then parted.

Meantime he sought the kind Missionary at the Old Dutch Church. He ran up into the upper Lecture room, where he found him and two or three brethren with him. His whole face was beaming with inward peace. In a few brief words he told the story of the lamp post and the great change.

"Oh! blessed be God" said the Missionary, and in a moment all were on their knees. "Now let us all pray in turn" said he, and he lifted up his voice to God in thanksgiving and praise for his unspeakable mercy to his *dear brother* in Christ, in thus meeting him in his pardoning mercy and renewing grace. One after another followed in prayer, and last the voice of this new creature in Christ Jesus.

Punctual to the minute the next morning he was at the store in Broad street. There he found a new suit of clothes throughout, which had been provided for him, and a place where he could have constant employment at fair wages.

He is a native of the city of New York--a ship

carpenter by trade. He was fourteen years at sea, and is forty-six years of age. A few months ago, his case was almost hopeless ; he was in the most abject and forlorn condition, and seemed to be sunk past all redemption. Now he gives abundant evidence that he is a new creature in Christ Jesus. "Old things have passed away ; all things have become new."

The writer within a fortnight has conversed with this recovered prodigal, and found him calm and peaceful in the service and enjoyment of the blessed Saviour.

THE DISINHERITED.

The following narrative was given at one of the Globe Hotel meetings by a gentleman from the West. He said that six months ago as he was standing on the west bank of the Mississippi river, a hand bill [the one of which a copy is given on p. 42] was put into his hand, inviting him to attend a prayer meeting in the city of New York. "It was the Fulton street prayer meeting. You can scarcely imagine the influence of such a little event as that upon the feelings, course, and eternal well being of an individual. I was invited when one thousand miles away to attend a Noon day prayer meeting of business men. I, a business man, in this great city of business, where time is money—surely there must be something in the religion of these men of business that amounts to a reality."

He said that on coming to the city, he complied with that invitation, which he had still in his pocket and intended to keep, and he should always have reason to be thankful that he ever attended one of those meetings. He had visited the cities east of us, and he every where found the daily prayer meeting.

He then went on to speak of revivals in places at the West. He spoke of one in particular of great interest. "In a neighbourhood where there was a large population but no church, the people built a large school house, and when it was finished, they resolved to hold in it union meetings for prayer. They were commenced and were largely attended. And when all who came could not get in, they would crowd around the windows to hear. The Lord poured out his Spirit in great power and many were converted.

"Living in the neighbourhood of that school house was a very wealthy and proud infidel. Some of his family were inclined to go to the prayer meeting. He called his family together, and said that if any of them went to that prayer meeting and 'got religion,' as he called it, they were to be disinherited and banished from the house. His wife was included with the children. She had attended, and so had his oldest daughter, which put him in a rage. The daughter continued to go to the prayer meetings and soon found peace in believing in Jesus. When an opportunity was given for those who had a hope in Christ to make

it known—she meekly arose and spoke of the ‘great change’ in her heart and her humble hopes of salvation through a crucified Saviour.

“There were those standing at the window outside who immediately went and told the father of the young lady of the professions she had made. When she went home that night, she met her father, standing in the doorway with a heavy quarto Bible in his arms.

“‘Maria,’ said he, ‘I have been told that you have publicly professed to night that you have ‘got religion.’ Is that so?’

“‘Father,’ said the girl, ‘I love you, and I think I love the Saviour too.’

“He opened his Bible to a blank leaf, and pointing with his finger, he said :

“‘Maria, whose name is that?’

“‘It is my name, Sir.’

“‘Did I not tell you that I would disinherit you if you got religion?’

“‘Yes, Sir.’

“‘Well, I must do it. You cannot come into my house.’ And, tearing the leaf of the Bible, ‘There,’ said he, ‘do I blot out your name from among my children. You can go.’

“She went to the house of a pious widow lady in the neighbourhood, and heard no more from her father for three weeks. One morning she saw her

father's carriage driving up to the door. She ran out and said to the driver, 'What is the matter, James?'

"Your father is very sick, and thinks he is going to die; and he is afraid he shall go to hell for his wickedness, and for the grievous wrong he has done you in disinheriting you and turning you from his house. He wants you to jump into the carriage and come home as quick as possible.'

"She found her father sick, indeed, on going home; but she soon saw he was only sin sick. She talked with him; she prayed with him; she endeavoured to lead him to Christ. In three days the father, mother, two brothers and a sister, were all rejoicing in hope, the whole family together made heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ to the heavenly inheritance. How faithful God is to those who put their trust in him."

THE INFIDEL LAWYER.

The meetings at the Globe Hotel were always attended, and sometimes conducted, by a gentleman whose history is very remarkable. A member of the New York bar, he was distinguished by his legal acumen and erudition, his eminent abilities, and his infidelity. For many years he has been a skeptic on every point in religion except the existence of a God. He was not a scoffer in the common acceptation of the word. He professed and meant to be a gentleman. But his prevailing opinion was, that Christians gene-

rally did not know enough to be infidels; that it required a man to have some brains to be a thorough going, consistent infidel, well able by good arguments to maintain his position. Such he was.

One Thursday evening in August, he arose and said, with great modesty of manner: "I am young in Christian experience. Not many months ago I would have scorned to have been in this place. Now it is my greatest delight. I looked upon Christ as setting an example of benevolence unexampled in the history of the race. I had no fault to find with his character. He was a *good man*, a man of spotless character, who gave utterance to some of the most beautiful precepts and maxims for human conduct the world has ever seen. So I regarded him *once*.

"But oh! how differently *now*. I did not think of Him as the Crucified, as bearing *my sins* in his own body on the tree, as suffering, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, as wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace being upon him. I am here a sinner, hoping I have been pardoned through him as my Saviour. The Holy Spirit brought arguments to my heart that made me feel my need of him. And when I was almost in despair, the same Holy Spirit revealed to me his Divine and glorious nature, and his ability to save to the uttermost. Oh! what a sinner I have been, and what a miracle of grace I am.

I have no words to express my thankfulness and gratitude, no tongue to tell the preciousness of Christ to me. Ages hence I can tell it better."

Then he led in prayer, in which he poured out all his soul to the Saviour in tones that went to every heart, in language of affection and devotion that will not soon be forgotten.

This gentleman had long been known to the Missionary of the North Dutch Church, who admired his abilities and his fine social traits, and had often tried to do him good. The first time they personally met was about ten years ago, when Mr. L. found the lawyer at a street corner, far gone in intemperance, bloated, soiled, ragged, unfit to appear in decent society. He ascertained his lodging place and promised to call on him; did so, but could not find him. He repeated the attempt frequently, and at last succeeded on a Lord's day morning in finding him at home, but not yet risen. He left word he would call after the services. These repeated manifestations of interest on the part of a total stranger awoke a train of serious thought in the lawyer's mind. He could not imagine what it all meant, but in his perplexity concluded on one good thing, viz: that he would not drink anything that day. In the evening Mr. L. came, invited the lawyer to take a walk, got him some refreshment, and finally brought him to a prayer meeting in the Broadway Tabernacle, where

the services affected him deeply, especially the singing, which revived many old associations.

After service the lawyer held out his hand to his friend, as he now regarded him, to say "good night," but his friend insisted on taking him home with him, and at last won his consent. The poor man having so suddenly broken off from his cups, suffered a terrible attack of delirium tremens, but his good friend watched with him through all the unspeakable horrors of the eventful night and the succeeding twelve hours. At times it seemed impossible for the sufferer to survive the struggle. But God was gracious to him, and he was spared. Having passed the crisis, he was restored to himself and to the community, but not to God. In 1848, he became a reformed, a sober man, but was as far as ever from being a Christian. Even the beautiful exhibition of Christian love and self sacrificing benevolence which he saw in the friend who sought him out so perseveringly, helped him to break the chains of intemperance, nursed him through the agony of deliverance, cheered him with sympathy and put him in the way of employment, position, and friends, had no effect upon his fixed, icy infidelity. Nor indeed was that friend at all instrumental in the change when it did come. Although he laboured in various ways to this end through the period from 1848 to 1858, yet all was without effect.

The means employed were the very last that infidel

himself would have imagined. It was the services of a body of Christians, with whose peculiarities he never had had any sympathies, and whom of all others he was most inclined to despise. But this will appear more fully from his own statement, which was written out at Mr. L.'s request and preserved among the archives of the Noon Prayer Meeting.

AWAKENING : CONVICTION : CONVERSION.

"It is past 6 o'clock ; clients and office companions have all left for their quiet homes ; I only am left alone. In that corner stands my cot, on which I shall presently rest for the night, to renew on the morrow the same dull routine that I have passed to-day and many days before.

"*Alone !* alone ! how shall I occupy or kill the time before it is ten, my usual resting hour ?

"I will go out and read the papers ; no, I will go over to the saloon, there I shall meet some one with whom to converse about the news of the day, Congress, the State Legislature, Kansas, politics, perhaps the great revival. What interest have I in that ? I have examined the subject of religion, the Bible, the Divinity of Christ. I reject the whole. It is not sustained by legitimate testimony. It is all foolishness. Many beautiful sayings are found in the Bible ; the benevolence of Christ is above all praise ; the writers of the Old Testament had some faint idea

of the existence of a spiritual God ; it was obscure, imperfect. Once I believed the Bible was a revelation from God, enjoyed religion, did not doubt its reality, was more happy then than now. Those exercised by it now appear to enjoy themselves. I will do nothing to mar their apparent happiness ; it will all end in death to be sure, but still I would reverse the sentiment of Paul, ‘ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable.’ For from observation and experience, I would say, if there be no immortality, no judgment, no heaven, no hell, no eternal *life* for the good ; if all religious enjoyments end at death, the Christian’s faith, the Christian’s hope are greatly to be preferred, as a means of present enjoyment.

“ There is that anonymous letter ; I read it to-day for the first time in twenty years ; it is rather a good letter, was doubtless well intended ; I will read it again. ‘ My dear brother in Christ,’ I wonder if you know how far I am from Christ now ? That address was thought to be proper at its date, (‘ March 17, 1838.’) What is that on the desk ? Notice of meeting : ‘ Green street M. E. Church, J. T. Peck, Pastor ; religious services every evening this week at half-past 7 o’clock ; come thou with us and we will do thee good.’ Have a good mind to go ; have not been in church for a long time ; wonder if they will look cross, stiff as they did at 13th street the last time

I was there ? It is half an hour yet ; will read the letter ; (did read it) ; will go to church ; it will be a good enough place for a couple of hours, then it will be time for retiring. Am in the church close by the door, hope I shall not intrude ; will be very civil. They are singing, praying, singing, preaching. Prayer Meeting announced ; shall I go home ? ‘ All are invited to stay ; ’ that does not mean me surely ; stay though ; leaders in the altar, singing, praying, anxious ones invited to come to the altar : ‘ if there are any in the congregation who desire the prayers of Christians, let them manifest it by rising ; ’ a pause, nobody rises ; wonder why the whole congregation do not rise ; good mind to rise myself and rebuke them for their stupidity ; thought every body wanted the prayers of Christians if they were sincere ; ashamed of the poor sinners who will not stand up to signify their desire for prayers of Christians, gratuitously offered ; singing, praying ; several members walking through the aisles speaking to individuals ; one comes where I am seated : ‘ Do you enjoy religion ? ’ It is pleasant to be here if I do not disturb any one. ‘ Are you a member of any church ? ’ Episcopal. ‘ We are glad to see you here ; will you not take a seat further up ? it will look more sociable. ’ If it will oblige you I will go—went up—began to feel some interest in the proceedings—they—Christians—seemed to enjoy it. How much better they are employed here than they would

be in some *rowdy meeting*, as some of them, doubtless, would have been had they not been here. Collections go round; put five cents in the plate; save two shillings for another purpose; felt better on that account—went home—slept well.

“It is again past 6 o’clock, P.M.; again alone. What shall I do this evening? There is that Green street Church notice; wonder if M. forgot it; he ought to take it to some place where it may do good. Shall I go again to-night? That anonymous letter again.

“ ‘TROY, March 17th, 1838.

“ ‘*Dear Brother in Christ:*

“ ‘Let me adopt this method of conversing on the subject of religion; let me ask a few plain and pertinent questions in a Christian temper. Dear Brother, are you enjoying your religion as you did some three or four years since? you will remember the time when you used to attend the regular Prayer Meetings of this Church, (Dr. Beman’s,) and I well remember, and think I was happy in those days, when you used to read Finney’s Lectures on Revivals. I well remember when you used to lead in prayer, and pray that sinners might be brought to a knowledge of Jesus Christ; you used to attend the little social circles of prayer, and I think my heart has been revived and refreshed in those little meetings that savored of Heaven.

“ ‘ You will remember the time when you used to take a great interest in the Ida Hill Sunday school, and many persons through your influence were induced to attend. Oh! dear brother, your voice is now silent on the subject of the salvation of sinners; you have deserted the Prayer Meetings, and you no more assist us in the struggle to save souls. Dear Brother, stop and think; pause, I beseech you, and see the influence that you are exerting in the cause of Christ; ask yourself, am I doing *all* that I can for God; are you living as *you promised* God you would when you hoped you gave yourself up to his service? Are you leading a life of prayer? Do you feel anxious that sinners should be saved, and do you warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come? Oh! enter in the work of Christ and pray with us that sinners may be saved; look at your past life and repent, and join with this Church and help us to save souls. We must soon die, let us work while the day lasts, for the night cometh wherein no man can work; we need your help; when professors of religion are cold and stupid, God will not work. Look to it, that you do not oppose God or stand in his way; look to it, lest you may be a stumbling block to sinners, and that the Lord will lead you to reflect and repent, and do your duty, shall be the earnest prayer of a brother in Christ.’ ”

“ Good advice: well, yes; think I will go to

church this evening. If I thought M. had left that notice here for me, I would not go; there is a package of them; he doubtless left them by mistake, or forgetfulness. I will go to meeting; what for? The Bible is no revelation; Christ is no God; God is sovereign, and will do with me just as he pleases in time and eternity. Why should I care? Why fret about that which I cannot help? Hell cannot be much worse than earth. I had nothing to do with bringing myself into this world; if I had been consulted about it, I would not have come. At all events, when I get into hell I shall be rid of one difficulty that torments men here—the fear of death. If I am to live there eternally, I shall have a constitution fitted for eternal duration and be rid of the fear of death, which troubles most men most. I do not care any thing about it. I have many a time wished myself dead; pity it is I ever had an existence. If my soul is immortal, it had existed somewhere before this state of existence; I am not conscious of it, and doubt if I will be conscious of any existence after death. Have seen animals die; oxen, horses, sheep; seen men die. After death what's the difference between them? They rot and decay alike, alike they are forgotten: what is there about animal man differing from animal beast? Nothing, nothing. Is my soul immortal; will it eternally endure? It may be so; what then? It will be a merely spiritual

existence, mingling with and lost in the great mass of immaterial existences; no individuality, no consciousness; it will be as it was before my present state. I will go to church again to-night; what will *they* say? I can never be renewed; I shall never again enjoy any religious emotion, how can I? I like to see others enjoy it; there is my best friend L., his whole soul is wrapped up in it; he seems to enjoy it; appears to be happy amidst trials and conflicts enough to drive a man crazy. His circumstances in this life are almost as bad as mine, yet he is always happy, I always miserable. I once did enjoy something of it, the letter reminds me of it; was happier then than now. I was sincere in my devotions then, and believed others were, how did I lose it? (Let darkness—deep, black, lasting darkness cover the story of my declension. God knows it, and he only has the right to disclose it. He has pardoned me; man cannot, man would not if he could; none have grace enough for that.)

“In church again; occupy the same seat. Few are present: it is early. Again requested to seat myself nearer to the altar, it will oblige him, the same kind member; it is done, services as before; inquirers kneeling at the altar, the pastor by the side of one of them (a man advanced in years), on his knees in prayer. The Spirit of God is in that prayer; it presented my case. God help me to take it to myself.

I was very mellow for a little season ; wondered how any person there (where all were to me strangers), should know my history on religious subjects. Went home unsatisfied, restless, sorry, glad, uneasy ; thankful that I went to church. Reminiscences of former times crowded upon me : those happier days, when religion, feeble in it as I was, gave joy to my soul, which many years of subsequent established and sincere infidelity could not wholly obliterate : those days ! I shall enjoy them no more ! Others do, and many continue to rejoice and glory in religious services ; they are not for me : believe, I cannot ; hope, I may not ; how can I answer my own skepticism, my own infidel arguments, my own reading of the Bible ? I always believed in God : *my God* : but not the Christian's God. What would S. and G. and M. and H. and B. and others say ? They who have so often complimented the conclusiveness of my infidel arguments, to hear me now attempt to refute them myself, and argue for Christianity ? No matter for them ; what would Christ say ? How could I speak to Him ?—of Him ? Christians *now* are more happy than I—the future world—alike to all—all nothing—nothing—nothing.

“Days passed, weeks passed ; the subject was continually upon my mind. I came to that day, that night of agony, of agony unspeakable : how shall I speak of it ? How write ? I cannot : it must not be

written. Well can I remember, but cannot speak, cannot write, can scarcely think again one tithe of *that* which came, pressed on, departed in quick succession from my mind. Was it a dream? As those days and weeks passed by, daily the meetings in Green street sanctuary were by me attended. Associates joked, ridiculed me for it. M., a new comer into our office, was a religious man; he had left those notices of meetings at Green street purposely for me (thus I learned). I was glad of it; thought I was not entirely abandoned to infidelity; this thought was strengthened by the members of the Church, who, with kindness, several of them expressed pleasure at seeing me at their meetings. Asked myself often, if there was a possibility for me to become a Christian: no, it cannot be. B., my other office associate, was, if possible, more infidel than myself. It was, perhaps, vanity in me that led me to see the weakness of his infidel argument; thought I could present them much more forcibly than could he. He, like myself, was a very wicked man. I could always refute him with the Christian's argument. I told M. that he ought to get B. converted, it would do him good, for he did not know enough to be an infidel; he did not understand the Scriptures well enough to maintain an infidel argument. M. replied, 'That is just what he says of you; he thinks it would be the best thing that could happen to you to get religion.' I thought it was impos-

sible for me, and told him so, but if B. would put himself in the way of religious services he would soon be converted. I attending the church, was often moved to distress, doubt, anxiety, despair. One evening the pastor came to the door of the pew I occupied; I was the only one in it. 'Please move along,' said he, 'and let me sit beside you.' I did so, and he sat beside me. 'I should like to know the state of your mind,' said he. I replied, 'I like to attend your meetings: hope I am not in the way of any person?'

" 'Do you enjoy religion?'

" 'No, not as I once did.'

" 'Do you belong to any church?'

" 'No: yes: I am an Episcopalian; was educated in that church, but for many years have seldom attended it; am not now a Christian, and suppose I never shall be; still I like to be here; it is a pleasure to me; and if I do not intrude, shall continue to come.'

" 'Come and welcome; we are glad to see you here, and hope it will do your soul good.'

" 'Thank you, sir.' Invited to go to the altar; inquirers were there; had a mind to go but did not. Meeting closed, went home, was alone in my room; old memories revived; distress: anguish: pray I cannot—try—no: it is of no use for me to try; whatever joy there may be in religion for others, there is none for me. The Bible! it speaks not for me. Jesus Christ! he is repudiated, rejected, slain—yes, crucified,

but not for me ; there was a time it might have been for me ; that time is passed : now it cannot be for me ; for me ? No, no ; never : sins of a life-time, how long ? How many ? All concentrated, real, deep, dark, damning ! Oh ! memory ! my soul sinks under their crushing weight ! Sins : sins against myself, man, God, against God ; sins terrible in aggregate ; more terrible in detail ; they enlarge, magnify, all, all in a moment ; nothing else but sin ; no, nothing. Oh, God ! how they cluster around me ! 'The room is dark, darker the gloom upon my soul ; in bed, alone, sleep : there is none for me ; agony, agony. Is it a dream that comes over me ; reality ? Yes, reality ; Jesus at a distance, Satan near (so it seemed) ; pray, pray ; a voice seemed to say, try—try to pray ; no ! God appears : still at a distance stands the Saviour ; his face fearfully solemn, no signs of anger in it. I think he would, but cannot save me ; his countenance alters not. Satan suggests, there is no hope, no hope for me ; I feel it—know it ; my souls sinks in despair. I look at the Saviour ; he seems to smile on me, and say, 'how foolish you are ; I have saved others as bad as you. Doubt not my power ; when you are in earnest, then look to me.' 'What, me ?' 'Yes, you ; my office is to save the worst. You have thought and said hard things of me, and now, in all your trouble, you look towards me, but do not trust me ; you have not faith in my power to do you good.' 'Is it possible

that I can be saved from this crushing load of sin ? Thoughts innumerable, troublesome thoughts, press heavily upon my mind and memory ; hours pass—try to be penitent, to believe, to pray ; cannot : exhausted—try to dispel these gloomy thoughts ! will not go at my bidding. Why am I troubled in this way ? It is all nonsense ; I cannot be in my right mind, must be crazy : horrible thought ! I will go to sleep ; shall feel better in the morning ; eyes closed ; cannot sleep, get up and look out of the window ; why, it is daylight ; and I have not slept a wink all night. What shall I do ? I am not sick ; my pulse is quick, but not much quicker than usual. I will go to meeting to-night, yes, to the altar : how absurd ! how foolish ! Lie down again, mentally saying, ‘ Blessed Jesus, let me sleep ; Satan begone, I am resolved to go ! ’

“ Again awake, two hours have passed. Blessed Jesus I thank thee ; canst thou indeed save *me* ? Comforting thought, is it *possible* ? Jesus have mercy on me ; Lord Jesus have mercy on me, even me. Feel strangely, something no language can describe what it is. Jesus is near, Satan stands back ; there is hope, faint, faint hope ; get behind me Satan : ‘ who-soever *will* let him come unto me.’ I will, blessed Saviour, help me ; am helped, I feel it ; will believe in Jesus, *my Saviour* ; help me to say so Jesus. Father in heaven have mercy on my soul for the sake

of Jesus ; Spirit of the living God ! direct me, help me. Oh help me, even *me*.

“The hour of business has arrived ; I am unfit for it, am not happy, hope I shall be : afraid not : in doubt and hope and fear, the day passes to near its close. I will go to the meeting this evening, will not go to the altar, that is not necessary ; will confess my sins to God, whilst they are praying ; will they pray for me ? They would not if they knew my moral position ; if they only knew how bad I am, they would not have me in their house. I will give it all up ; God knows just how bad I am, he has pardoned some very wicked men. I will go to the altar. Why should I hesitate ? Others have there been blessed, why may not I ? They will pray for me : if they do God may forgive me : he has pardoned others : the thief upon the cross ; denying, swearing Peter.

“Friend L. is experienced in these matters, I will see him and tell him all ; he knows me, all my circumstances. He will not believe a word I say, will think it pretence ; not a being of my acquaintance but would do the same. None of them will believe that I can repent and be saved. Cannot blame them, would not believe it myself of any one else in my circumstances ; for myself I only hope it may be possible. I will go and see L. : it will not do any good, he will say I am drunk or crazy ; have drank no li-

quor in months: he will scold me: I will see him, nevertheless; I want his advice.

“On the way to L.’s—wonder if he is at home—hope he will not be there; what will he say? I will turn back, won’t make a fool of myself. These feelings will all be gone in a little while; shall then be ashamed I ever had them: turn back, turn round, people in the street will think me crazy; can’t help it. God help me—words of prayer, do I mean them? Try mentally to pray; enter L.’s room; none there but he: how do you do? ‘Why C. what is the matter with you?’ Don’t know. ‘Are these tears of penitence? It would rejoice my heart to think so.’ No answer. ‘Come, let us kneel down and pray.’ He prayed, prayed for me. ‘You pray for yourself.’ ‘God have mercy,’ I heard my own voice say. I had mercy; felt it; was relieved; told L. all my feelings and resolutions. ‘You have resolved right, you just do it.’ Did resolve and was happy; if tears were shed, they were grateful tears.

“On the way from L.’s to the church: will tell the brethren what the Lord has done for my soul, and thank them for their prayers and kindness; will acknowledge God my Saviour before them, and pray for Divine assistance.

“In the church, sermon is ended; brethren in the altar, singing; sinners invited to come to the altar; I rise to speak; cannot utter a word; altar, altar,

altar, seems to sound in my ears ; start for it ; kneel ; they are singing, praying ; the heavens are brass over me ; no God—no Saviour ; time passes, sounds are heard ; they become faint, fainter, cease ; consciousness is suspended ; I feel a pricking sensation about my head, hands, feet, all over me, similar to that I once felt when restored to consciousness from apparent death ; I hear music, ‘come to judgment ;’ a well-known voice in prayer (the voice of M. ;) ‘Oh ! my Saviour,’ it says ; I seem to see my Saviour on my right side, Jesus smiling upon me, his face radiant with love ; my soul is filled with grateful joy, literally unspeakable and full of glory ; standing up before the altar with my brethren as their shouts of thanksgiving ascend to heaven ; I am too full to utter anything but thanks to my brethren, thanks to my God and Saviour.

“As I look back upon that hour of agony and deliverance, with what thrilling emotions can I repeat the words of one of our hymns.

“‘Tongue can never express
The sweet comfort and peace
Of a soul in its earliest love.’

“From thence, hitherto, I have, by God’s grace, rejoiced with thankfulness in the blessed assurance of His willingness and ability to pardon and save to the

uttermost all who come to him through Jesus Christ my Saviour.

“ ‘ What I have felt and seen
With confidence I tell,
And publish to the sons of men
The signs infallible.’ ”

“ I *know* that *my* Redeemer lives, for whose sake God has *pardoned* me, and I rejoice every day in believing that here and hereafter I shall be happy ; that it may be so, my constant prayer to God shall ascend for grace and the aid of his Holy Spirit.”

One of the effects of the publication of this thrilling narrative is seen in the following request, which was dated at Chicago, Sep. 16th, and was signed by the writer's own name.

“ The reading of an Infidel Lawyer's Experience has awakened an anxiety for my soul's salvation. Without being an unbeliever, I am still in the bonds of iniquity.

“ My object in writing is to solicit the earnest prayers of the members of the Globe Hotel and Fulton street Prayer Meetings, that these bonds may be sundered, and that God in his infinite mercy will convert me and enable me to find peace in believing in Jesus.

“ Respectfully,

“ _ _ _ ”

This chapter may be properly closed by the insertion of some lines sent by a lady of Maryland to the New York Observer and published in that journal.

PRAYER MEETINGS AT THE GLOBE HOTEL.

THE INVITATION.

Come to the Globe Hotel, ye men who drive
The nail and hammer, and all ye who thrive
By daily toil: Come in your daily dress;
Think you for this that Jesus loves you less?
While mending nets the fishermen He chose,
And round *your* hearts the same command He throws.

Did not the Saviour labor at a trade?
Then be not of our humble Lord afraid!
With many a weary step how did He toil!
Shall he now shun a garment bearing soil?
No, 't is the contrite heart, the sad, the faint
He came to save, and not the dainty saint.
Up men of work! The Saviour hears all prayer,
Brethren at the Hotel await to share,
With you the blessing. Mutual prayer shall prove
An earnest to this creature of God's love.
Give Him the praise and swell the growing throng,
Till hill and valley join the exultant song.
Pray for the wastes where yet no gracious rain
From the all-wise descends to greet the plain;
For thirsty villages, that, cold and sad,
Sit silent, while God's mercy makes *you* glad.

If you have tasted that the Lord is good,
Pray that your neighbours share the heavenly food:
If you are captive to your sins, draw near,
Here breathe the sigh, here drop the sorrowing tear;
Pray for your children, for your country pray,
The night soon comes, then work while it is day.

J. C. W.

CHAPTER VIII.

Requests for Prayers.

ALMOST from the commencement of the Meeting, it has been customary to receive requests that some particular person or persons should be especially remembered in the supplications of God's people.

In many cases the applicants arise in the midst of the assembly and state the character and circumstances of the object for which they desire intercession to be made. In a few instances, persons awakened by the Holy Spirit, have been impelled by their deep distress to make known their state of mind in the same way and ask Christians to plead for them with God. At one time it was proposed to make it the leader's duty to call for such requests, at a stated part of each day's proceedings, but the proposal was discountenanced as injudicious, and as opening a door for other measures not consistent with the great design of the Meeting. At the same time it was distinctly stated, as indeed had always been

understood, that these interesting requests, whenever voluntarily made, would be cordially welcomed and responded to.

By far the greater portion of the requests come in writing, sometimes anonymously, but often with the name and address of the writer in full. One interesting case of the latter kind is that of a poor outcast who had been brought into a Magdalen Asylum, where she was regarded as one of their "hardest cases." Yet entirely of her own accord, she wrote the note, of which a *fac simile* (the name for obvious reasons being suppressed), is given on another page. It need not be said that she was most fervently commended to God—to Him who talked with the impure woman of Samaria, and who allowed one that had been "a sinner" to wash his feet with her tears and wipe them with the hairs of her head.

As the Meeting became more widely known, the requests began to multiply in number and kind. Persons at a distance, hearing of the wonderful answers which had been vouchsafed to the cries of believing suppliants in this assembly, took an early opportunity to secure similar intercessions on behalf of objects which lay near to their hearts, and accordingly sent in their requests in more or less detail. Many of these found their way to the religious press, and thus the practice was bruited abroad over a still wider region, and still greater numbers sought to avail

1858
New York Friday Sept 24th

To the Fulton Street prayer meeting
I desire the prayers of the church I feel that
I have been a very wicked girl and that I
have led a very bad life and I feel my
need of Christ I want to be a Christian

your obedient servant.

themselves of the prayers of the Fulton street Meeting. And now for months the mail has every day brought these requests, sometimes amounting to as many as thirty in a single day. They come from all parts of the Union, from the Eastern States, from the Western, and especially from the Southern even to the Western borders of Texas, from the British Provinces, and also from beyond the sea, from towns in England, Germany and Switzerland. Sometimes they were forwarded to the Pastors of the Collegiate Church; at others to the conductors of the religious journals; again, to the Missionary, Mr. Lanphier; and in two instances the writers not knowing any other channel of communication, sent their letters to the chief magistrate of the City, who promptly complied with their request, as appears by the following note from his clerk:

“MAYOR’S OFFICE,
“New York, Sept. 24th, 1858.

“*To the officiating Minister at the Union Prayer Meeting, Fulton street:*

“*Dear Sir:*—The MAYOR has directed me to enclose to you the within requests, received at his office, with the wish expressed, to forward them as above directed.

“I am respectfully,

“J. B. AULD, Mayor’s Clerk.”

These requests as they accumulated were filed in an old ledger from which the original leaves had been torn out. When this was full, a still larger volume made for the purpose was procured, and lettered **BOOK OF REQUESTS**, on the ample pages of which every communication received is carefully preserved. These notes are from persons of every age, from the child whose hand is not yet formed, to the old grand-sire whose trembling characters indicate the weight of years. Some are written on tinted paper of exquisite gloss, and others on sheets of the coarsest texture. Here is one in the bold rapid hand of a business man, and close beside it another in a lady's neat Italian characters. Occasionally they are surrounded with the ominous black edging which tells of recent bereavement. On the same page with a manuscript full of errors in spelling and syntax, will be found another which might be given as a model of easy and correct composition.

The contents of these notes are as various as their outward features. Sometimes it is a saint seeking more grace, or again, a wanderer desiring to be restored, or an awakened person longing for peace in Christ, but most generally it is Christian friends anxious for the conversion of dear friends and relatives. Many of these simply state what is wanted in the fewest possible words, but others enter into detail and unfold sad pages of domestic history. The curtain is

lifted from sorrows which the sufferers have carried in their hearts for many years, but now at last expose to view, allured by the hope of Christian sympathy and aid in spreading them before the mercy seat. There is no possibility of mistaking the character of these earnest appeals. They are such as could have come only from hearts tenderly alive to eternal realities, and filled with the spirit of Queen Esther's exclamation, "How can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred!" Nor is there any risk in prophesying the certain fulfilment of these petitions. Where the Lord excites such deep interest, such an agony of desire, he intends to accomplish the result. And nothing is too hard for him.

The number of these requests not unfrequently excited deep solicitude in the minds of thoughtful Christians, lest a kind of superstitious feeling might be encouraged in those who send these communications and a sense of self-complacency be engendered in those who received them. On one occasion, an excellent brother called attention to the subject, and said,

"I am afraid of this; I am afraid of spiritual pride. I am afraid the Spirit of God will leave us. I have my misgivings about all this. Every request read here is a dagger to my heart."

But immediately another arose, and with deep emotion, said,

"Oh, do not discourage these requests for prayer.

Where would my son have been had it not been for your prayers? I have followed him around the globe with mine. He lately came home from sea unconverted. I brought his case right here. I said, 'Men of Israel, help.' I wanted you to help me pray for him. I knew you could not do anything for him *but* pray. God must do all the work. He must bow that stubborn will and humble that proud heart. Oh! what cause of thankfulness and joy I have, that God hears and answers prayer. That son is to-day a new creature in Christ Jesus, as I humbly trust, and to Him be all the glory. Do not feel tired with the coming of these requests for prayer. Oh! No! no! Let us rejoice that they *do* come. But let them pray who send them to this prayer meeting. Let the language of all the hearts in this assembly be 'The power belongeth unto God.' 'Turn us, O Lord, as the streams of the South.' Let us pray for all who ask us to pray, believing, trusting, hoping, and humbling ourselves low before God."

The same subject was made the theme of judicious remark by another speaker on a subsequent occasion. He said, "We are in danger of spiritual pride, because so many eyes are turned to the Fulton street Prayer Meeting, and because so many requests for prayer come to us from all parts of the land. I know that many feel troubled because they come; some, because they occupy too much of the attention

of this meeting; others, because they fear that the impression will be created that this is *the* Prayer Meeting above all others, where God hears and answers prayer. Now both these evils are to be guarded against. I have been this morning to that upper room where all these requests are kept. I have looked at their contents and character, and I can truly say that my heart was filled with the deepest emotion as I read them. There are requests for prayer there, written as none of us would write them, for none of us could feel as the writers felt when they wrote them. They bear the most unmistakable marks of the anguish and agony of desire for unconverted friends, which only converted persons would feel. There all the relations of life are represented; asking us to pray for brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, acquaintances, friends, churches, parishes, prayer meetings, ministers. Now some of these requests are very touching as the following from a daughter for an unconverted father. I hope we shall never be unwilling that such requests shall come here, and never feel lifted up because they come. This is no Mecca, nor Medina, no Mosque, nor Holy Sepulchre. We feel humbled because they come, not exalted. We lie low before God, while He alone is exalted. Let us cherish the true spirit of fervent humble prayer, and let our faith and prayer go out after all

these cases, and bear them up to the throne of the heavenly grace. Who can tell the results of our petitions? Who can number or contemplate the value of the blessings which may come upon dying souls in answer to prayer? We have to do with the perishing. We pray for their salvation. We learn here the power of prayer in the signal answers which are given. Everything leads us to prayer."

We proceed to give some specimens of the different classes of these communications. The first is an importunate entreaty from a sorrowing mother far away in Texas, who gives her name and address in full:

FOR A FIRST BORN.

"Oct. 15th, 1858.

"For pity's sake, lend me your prayers for a first born son. He curses me, his widowed mother; and, with a demon scowl, has turned his back on me for life. And why? Because I have been his best and most faithful friend. I have striven to rescue him from the blighting influence of a wicked female, who has taught him to scorn his poor, desolate mother, and in her charmed circle drags him down to hell. His sainted father is in Heaven, and died exhorting me to train his three boys to meet him there. Oh! how I have struggled on through adverse circumstances to make them all they should be.

"Oh! pray for my three sons, who are all back-

sliders. Oh! pray for Willie who despises his mother. For God's sake, pray for Willie that he may be a minister of Christ. For this I dedicated him before his eyes opened on this sinful world."

The next two are for a class of persons for whom tender concern is always cherished by Christian hearts.

FOR BACKSLIDERS.

"———, Georgia, Sept. 5th, 1858.

"The prayers of the Christians of the Fulton street meeting are earnestly implored by a young lady who has been once a backslider from God, and who, in the midst of peculiarly harassing temptations, is now endeavoring to return *fully* to her former rest. Do not —do not forget her. 'Lord I believe, help Thou my unbelief.'"

"Central New York, Sept. 13.

"Dear Brother in Christ,

"If it would not be asking too much of a stranger, I would request of the brethren of the Fulton street Church their prayers for my husband, who was once a professor of religion but has wandered far away from duty and God. Also for my only son, who is all that a son need be, but a Christian.

"A WIFE AND A MOTHER."

FROM "A DYING SINNER."

"I am on my return home from a visit made to my father. He takes your paper and I have read with in-

terest the account of the revival in your city. I was struck with the remarkable instances in answer to prayer, recorded even when the subjects were far away. My object in writing is to ask an interest in those prayer meetings for myself. Can you not present my case before the Fulton street Prayer Meeting. I have desired earnestly to be a Christian ever since I can recollect. But one besetting sin stands like a mountain in my way. I have at times thought I was a Christian, and that my sin was conquered. But in the moment of extraordinary temptation my good resolutions would fly to the winds, and I would fall to suffer the pangs of bitter remorse. I have found I can do nothing, and without help from God I must be lost eternally. Oh! I intreat of you, that in your united prayers, you beg that the enormity of sin could appear in such a light to me that true repentance may follow, and that never more I may yield to temptation. With much prayer I wait the answer to yours.

“A DYING SINNER.”

FROM A LITTLE GIRL.

“Savannah, Ga., August 28, 1858.

“DEAR SIR:—I am a little girl, and scarcely know how to write to a perfect stranger on so important a subject. But oh! I want to be a Christian so much; and I have been asking God for a long time to make

me one, but he has not answered my prayers yet. He has promised to give to them that ask him; but I am afraid that I have not asked him in the right way, for he is a God of truth, therefore the fault must be with me. I look around me, and here and there I see my little playmates giving their hearts to God, and it makes me feel so sad, to think nothing can soften my hard heart. I am afraid I will never be a Christian. Sometimes I almost give up in despair, but I know that I can never be happy, either in this world or the next, unless I am a child of God; and I want to learn to love the Saviour; for it would be so pleasant to have him for my friend, and to know that he loves me.

"I saw a notice in a New York paper the other day, that God's people would pray for any one who sent on their requests to you at the Fulton street Prayer Meeting; so I thought that I would write, and ask their prayers in my behalf. Perhaps God, in his great mercy, may see fit to answer your prayers, and make an angel of

"_____."

FROM A LITTLE BOY.

"Burk Co., Ga., Oct. 4th, 1858.

"I am a little boy 12 years of age, and tell the truth, and I want to be prayed for.

"Very respectfully,

"_____."

FOR DEAR RELATIVES.

The following was addressed to the editor of the *Christian Intelligencer*.

“CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA., SEPT. 1, 1858.

“I read in the last number of the *Southern Churchman* an extract from your paper, detailing the method (by reference to the one in Fulton street) of conducting the daily prayer meetings in your city. I was much struck with what seemed to me the nearest approach to a truly Christian meeting that I had ever seen. The devotional element seems to me lacking in our ordinary church worship, where the prominent idea has come to be the delivery of an address. And in our ordinary prayer meetings there is so much apparent formality, so little apparently really *meant* by the prayers, that when I, for the first time, last week, saw a congregation gathered, I presumed from various churches, meeting in that simple way — on a week day — in a business centre, and one after another from all parts of the country, singled out specifically as the subject of that Christian intercession, I felt as if at last the true key had been struck, and more done to bring down the Divine mercy upon our people and to imbue the Christian brotherhood with the true missionary spirit, than had been accomplished by many a Sunday’s work, and many a religious meeting where the prayers were general, and more reli-

ance fixed upon the effort of the preacher than the readiness of God to effect our wishes.

“I believe intercessory prayer will do more for the parties praying and prayed for, than any agency I know of. Apart from its results as respects the immediate object of it, if persisted in and followed out, it will make every Christian an active worker, and gradually expand the Christian work into an overshadowing importance in his estimation.

“But my object in writing was not to express these feelings; it was to ask an interest in those prayers. I have a father, two brothers, one sister, for whom I have long, long prayed. I wish at some meeting that *earnest and special prayer* may be made for their conversion. I would have it, as far as consistent with the claims of others, *as specific as possible*. I do not know if I am right in advising you on the subject, but do so in the absence of any one with whom I am acquainted, knowing that you are a member of the Church where this meeting is held.

“I see few evidences in Virginia of the revival which has been so marked elsewhere. Will your Meeting pray God that it may visit us, and this *community*.

“If you will assist me in having the persons I have referred to remembered in the Prayer Meeting, I shall

feel deeply indebted to you, and those kind friends who shall comply with my wishes.

"I am, Sir, very truly yours,

"P. S. I need not express *how much* I am concerned about the subject matter of this letter. Its accomplishment is to me the *great end in life*; it is my constant, principal, absorbing wish. May the prayer which I have solicited in this behalf, be instrumental in causing its fulfillment."

FOR AN ONLY SON.

On Friday, October 22, 1858, a lady, on entering the room shortly after the services commenced, quietly laid an envelope upon the desk. The leader did not at first observe it, being occupied with numerous other requests then before him, but afterwards getting an opportunity; opened the enclosure and found the following letter. At a suitable time he rose to read it to the Meeting, but after proceeding a part of the way through, was so overcome by the emotions which he strove hard to suppress, that he could not go on, but was compelled to give it to one of the persons near him to finish. The effect upon others was similar. Many strong men bowed their heads to hide their tears.

It is needless to add that the request was fervently and abundantly remembered. In like manner it

was made the theme of special prayer at the Old Slip Prayer Meeting, where an equal interest was felt in the subject matter of it. It was also taken to a prayer meeting in Brooklyn, and there fervent prayer went up to heaven for this only son in Oregon, who bids his mother not to write to him on the subject of religion.

“To the Pastor of the Fulton street Church.

“Rev. and dear Sir:—I read weekly of the wonderful works the Lord is doing in your midst, in converting sinners in answer to the prayers of His people.

“I have an only son—given to God in infancy—left fatherless in early childhood—but has been a subject of prayer ever since his birth up to the present time. He is now thirty-five years of age. Have not seen him for the last ten years. His home is now in Oregon.

“Our communications by letter have been frequent, and *his* very *kind*, and he has proved the kindness of his heart by liberal presents. But he does not love religion.

“In a recent letter he entreats me not to write him any more religious letters, as they will do him no good.

“I need not say, al' a mother's soul was stirred within me. I wrote him a reply as faithfully as I could, for the last time, on that subject, on condition

that he would promise to acquit me at the judgment bar, as having done all a mother's duty for the salvation of his soul. I have not heard from him since, but have felt to agonize with God in prayer for his speedy conversion, till within a short time, I have not had that intensity of feeling, and fear the Spirit is saying, 'He is joined to his idols, let him alone.'

• "I have asked the Lord what he would have me to do. And my mind is inclined to send a request to the Fulton street Prayer Meeting, that special prayer may be made for the speedy conversion of his precious, immortal soul. It has long been my prayer—'Oh God! convert my son!' I feel like the mother of Augustine, that I cannot, cannot give him up—cannot leave any effort possible to be made for his salvation unattempted.

"This request is therefore submitted to the Fulton street Prayer Meeting by

"AN ANXIOUS MOTHER."

Very many requests have been made on behalf of churches, towns, counties, districts and even whole states. Here is a specimen :

FOR A VILLAGE IN ILLINOIS.

"To the Christians of the Fulton street Union Prayer Meeting. Brethren beloved:—Our hearts bless and praise God for what he is doing in the

churches. *But we are burdened.* We have been engaged in a union prayer meeting for about six months. At first it was well attended, but has since been abandoned by many who profess to love the Lord Jesus. A few of us cannot give it up—the hour of prayer. We are hoping that God will yet hear and answer in a glorious revival, a work which shall bring salvation to the perishing. Because we believe in the efficacy of prayer we address you. Will the dear brethren help us at the throne of grace? Pray for us! O, pray for us! that the Holy Spirit may be poured out. In behalf of our community I write.”

FOR A CHURCH IN TEXAS.

“Dear Sir: In the name, and for the honour and glory of our blessed Jesus of Nazareth, we humbly and earnestly beseech an interest in those prayers which have been so signally blessed heretofore for others, in behalf of both preacher and people of our little Church of Texana. We long to see the stately steppings of Immanuel in our midst.

“Y’rs in the love of a crucified Redeemer.

“ — — — ”

FOR A DAILY PRAYER MEETING.

Last month, a gentleman arose in the body of the room and said: “I come to ask this Meeting to pray for one of her children. She has a great many scat-

tered all over the country. I mean to ask you to pray for our Prayer Meeting on Staten Island. Soon after we heard what the Lord was doing with you in your meeting, we gathered our pastors and Churches, and we resolved on holding a similar meeting on Staten Island. We also resolved on open-air, out-of-doors preaching. You know that our Island is overrun with people from your cities on the Sabbath. They come in steamboat loads, and they spend the day in rioting and revelry through our streets and fields and groves. So we resolved to establish in a beautiful grove prayer meetings and preaching on the Sabbath, hoping to gather in some of the wandering crowds. This meeting has been a great success. We have had a number of hopeful conversions. We are about to renew our daily prayer meetings, and we hope you will remember us in your prayers. This daily prayer meeting is the child of the Fulton street Prayer Meeting. Pray for us, as we pray for you."

Of course, the mother wrestled for her child.

FOR A FATHER.

"NEW YORK, Sept. 7th, 1858.

"Dear Sir :

"Will you, for our common Master's sake, present the following request at the next prayer meeting.

"A daughter desires the earnest prayers of God's people for a father, aged, absent, and far from God,

that he may, though at the eleventh hour, be brought into the fold of the blessed Redeemer.

“Very respectfully,
“A. S. B.”

FOR CHILDREN AND GRAND-CHILDREN.

Once a gentleman presented a request from a lady far advanced in years, and remarkable for her piety ; in fact, living close by the gate of heaven. He said, “I have known her for twenty years. She came to the city poor, with herself and her little children to support. She sent them to the Sabbath school. She always kept her children neat and looking respectable. Again and again she has had to wash their clothes on Saturday night, after her children had gone to bed, dry and iron them, so that the children should be enabled to come to Sabbath school the next day. These children always had their lessons. They have had the very best moral training, but they are not Christians. Some of these are married and have children. The sons are in Minnesota. The daughters are here. Now, on behalf of this lady, I ask you to pray for the conversion of her children and grand-children.”

FROM A NEW JERSEY PASTOR.

“Men of Business, Men of Prayer, Beloved in the Lord :

“This is to request you to pray for the conversion of my three sons, now living and doing extensive business in a rising town in Kansas. They give their means with a liberal hand, to advance the worship of God. But oh! they still withhold their hearts. Do, dear brethren, help an aged father to pray for their saving conversion. ‘Men of Israel, help!’”

FOR A ROMAN CATHOLIC SERVANT.

A brother requested prayers for a girl of this class in peculiar circumstances.

He said she had been for some time under very serious impressions. They began with the conversations which a young man, who was converted in this revival, had with her after he was taken sick. In his sickness he frequently talked with this poor servant, and recommended the Saviour to her. He died and left a bright testimony behind him of the truth of religion. This benighted Romanist saw religion exemplified in a new light. “I have often talked with her,” said the gentleman, “and I feel sure she is not far from the kingdom of heaven.”

FROM A CHRISTIAN IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND.

“To the Christian Friends who assemble at the Fulton street Prayer Meeting.

“Dear Brethren and Sisters, you will not, I trust, refuse the request I am about to make, because I am at so great a distance. I have read with inexpressible delight accounts of the great work of God in which you are so happily engaged ; and last night as I read an account of some very affecting requests which had been presented, and the gracious answers which had been vouchsafed, the thought struck me at once to write to you, in order to ask an interest in your prayers.

“The object for which I beg *special prayer* is a village situated about three miles from the town of L., having a population of about one thousand souls. Of this number not more than forty or fifty make any profession of religion, and of them (judging by their fruits), not more than a dozen are really in earnest to serve God. A general deadness seems to have settled upon the place. Drunkenness, Sabbath breaking, profane swearing, and indeed sins of every kind, prevail to an alarming extent. The *old* seem to be almost beyond hope, and the *young* are enthusiastic in serving the God of this world.

“I cannot bear to see so many people going headlong to destruction. God is dishonored and souls are perishing, some of them my own relatives and friends.

“I therefore make this appeal to you, on whom God has smiled ; you who have seen the arm of the Lord made bare so often, you who daily meet to plead for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

“I appeal to you ! Men of Israel, help ! Will you help me ? Will you pray for me ? Would it not rejoice your hearts to hear of this valley of dry bones becoming an army for the living God ? If you have any love for God, any sympathy for perishing sinners, I beseech you deny me not. Give God no rest. Pray for us in public and also in private.

“Yours, in the fellowship of the Gospel,

“ ——— ——— ”

FOR SEAMEN ON BOARD OF A MAN-OF-WAR.

On the 3rd of August, 1857, the U. S. ship Savannah set sail on a cruise. Fifteen of the crew, just before sailing, sent in their names that they might be remembered in the prayers of the Fulton street Prayer Meeting. It was stated that thirteen of these were pious men, and two are anxious about their souls. They have sent a letter to the commanding officer of the ship, that they may have leave to hold a daily prayer meeting on board during the dog-watch, (from 4 to 6, and from 6 to 8 P.M.), and they are pledged to sustain this, or some other prayer meeting, as God shall give them opportunity. And it is believed that God will give them the opportunity for prayer by in-

c'ining the heart of the captain to appoint a place and time.

Fervent supplications were offered for these men and all their shipmates, that God would convert the entire company, and make the gun deck vocal with prayer and praise.

A similar request was afterwards sent to New York, signed by forty-five of the marines and seamen of the U. S. ship Wabash, while absent on a cruise.

FOR CHILDREN.

A gentleman one day presented a request which had been handed to him by a lady living five hundred miles away, to this effect :

“ A mother sends a request for prayers for the conversion of a son, and that he may consecrate himself to the ministry. Tell the praying men of Fulton street to pray as they never prayed before, for my son must be converted—he must preach the Gospel.”

Prayer was offered. Then a gentleman arose in the back part of the room to ask for prayers for himself and his children, six in number, five of whom were out of Christ. “ I myself am as a brand snatched from the burning. More than eighteen years ago I hoped I was converted, and I lived those eighteen years a miserable backslider. But I trust I have been pardoned and recovered, and brought back to the fold of Christ. All that time I have had the prayers of a

praying wife; I have filled her cup with sorrow. But she never stopped praying, and I owe it to her prayers that I am here to-day. And now my great anxiety is for my children, that they may become the children of God. A little time ago, and you would have supposed me one of the 'hard cases.' But I am a monument of the power and grace of God. If I was not to be given up, you need not give anybody up. All things are possible with God."

On another occasion, a father brought into one of the meetings a sealed letter to a son in South America and laid it upon the desk, and requested the prayers of the Christians that the Spirit and blessing of God might go with that letter, and make it the means of the conversion of that distant and much loved son. The letter was an earnest entreaty that he might become reconciled to God.

FOR A BROTHER.

This moving appeal, of which a fac simile is given on the opposite page, was enclosed to the author some weeks ago. He took the first opportunity to lay it before the Meeting, and the "Sister" may be assured that she did not "carry her burden alone" that day.

FOR ANOTHER BROTHER.

"A young man now in this room, who is preparing himself for the ministry, asks the prayers of this

My dear Friends,

May I ask your prayers for my younger Brother. For years every prayer of my own has been a cry to God for his conversion - but, besides myself, I do not know of one connected with him who 'cares for his soul'. Since reading of your blessed Meetings I have felt that I need bear this burden alone no longer.

Plead for him - plead earn
estly for him - not once - nor twice -
but day after day - Do not forget
a soul that has but one in the
whole world to pray for it. And
may God - for Jesus's sake - listen to
your supplications, and those of
his Sister -

people in behalf of an unconverted brother who resides in Iowa. That his aged mother, who has reared eleven children, all of whom that have arrived to years of discretion, are now rejoicing in Christ, may be permitted to see her prodigal son return to God before she goes to her final rest."

A CORDON OF PRAYER.

As a pertinent conclusion to this Chapter, we may cite the cheering remarks made by a brother one day in reference to the number of requests from a distance, and the variety of the sources from which they came. He said that he drew a very encouraging inference from the fact that all parts of the land asked an interest in the prayers here. We might feel sure that all those who asked us to pray for them, prayed for themselves and for us also. And thus it seemed to him as if a cordon of prayer were thrown around this meeting.

"The voices of these friends are never heard in this room. But there is a power here which we can scarcely appreciate. It is a power which helps us to prevail in prayer and calls down countless blessings upon us. *Others* pray that *our* prayers may be answered. What a day in which to work! What encouragement to effort! All over our land the voice of prayer goes up to the heavenly hills from these hearts which know best how to pray. Let us be

thankful for the ten thousand times ten thousand silent voices that assist us in our prayers and call down blessings on our heads. I think that herein lies one of the secrets of our success at the throne of grace, and here is a reason for such signal answers to prayer."

It may be well to add, in regard to this subject, that the sending of requests from abroad has never been invited, much less urged by the Committee of Consistory or the Missionary. At the same time, when such requests are voluntarily forwarded, they are never refused or slighted, but carefully preserved and in due time read from the leader's desk. While the Committee did not originate the custom of sending them from all parts of the country, they are unwilling to put a compulsory end to it.

CHAPTER IX.

Requests for Thanks.

THE stream of requests constantly flowing in to the Fulton street Meeting is sometimes most agreeably varied by new communications from old contributors. They who before came to ask Christians to pray with them, now ask their brethren to unite in joyful thanksgiving to God for mercies received, like the woman in the parable, who "calloeth together her friends and her neighbours, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost." Not so many letters and notes of this kind have been received as might have been expected, in consideration of the numerous instances in which prayer for specific objects has been offered and answered.

This in many cases is no doubt owing to circumstances which forbid the opportunity to make known the result. In others, the joy of conversion so absorbs the mind of the new-born soul that the matter is forgotten. That soul may indeed be full of praise and

gratitude to God for his marvellous and distinguishing goodness. But while itself lauding His name, does not think of calling upon others to join with it in the blessed work. In a third class the explanation may possibly be found in the story of the ten Samaritan lepers whom our Lord delivered from their horrible malady. Only one of the ten "turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell upon his face at his feet giving him thanks." The rest went on their way to the priest, rejoicing and doubtless thankful, but at least not manifesting their thanks in the usual way. Indeed, it has often been said, and justly, that there is no one duty in which Christians, otherwise exemplary and zealous, are so often deficient as in that of thankfulness. It need not therefore be very surprising if they who have but just begun the Christian course, should fall short in this respect. Yet there have been some very pleasing expressions of gratitude and praise sent in by persons who had been at a former period remembered in prayer.

A WIDOW FOR HER SON.

Last winter a widow asked the prayers of the Meeting for a son who had cursed her, and the writer well remembers the thrill which went through those who heard of this unnatural wickedness. Shortly afterwards, she sent a note saying,

"The widow who asked the prayers of the people

of God for a son who had cursed her, desires to return thanks to a prayer hearing God. Her son has asked *her* pardon.

“She now requests prayer to be made that he may cry out for pardon from *God*.”

OF A RECLAIMED BACKSLIDER.

“A wanderer from the fold of Christ, who publicly requested the prayers of the Fulton street Noon-day Prayer Meeting, desires to render thanks to God for his blessing in answer to the prayers of God’s people : and would request the prayers of this meeting for a son, a seafaring man, who is without hope and without God in the world, that in his infinite mercy he would bring him to a knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus.”

FOR A SON’S CONVERSION.

“A widowed father, who some time since asked an interest in your prayers for the conversion of an only son and child, desires now to give devout thanks to God for the salvation of that son ; and that it can now be said of him, ‘Behold he prayeth.’ ‘Bless the Lord, O my soul.’”

FOR THE CONVERSION OF THREE MEMBERS OF A FAMILY.

“The thanksgivings and praises of this congregation are requested, in view of what God has bestowed upon a family for whom you prayed. Three

of the number have been hopefully converted, and one taken home to glory, leaving a triumphant testimony to the power of God's converting and sustaining grace. Christian friends, there are still three of this family out of Christ, and for whom the departed earnestly prayed that they might be an unbroken family in Heaven. These three are now exercised, and we trust the Holy Spirit is doing His work in the midst of their sorrows. Your united, earnest prayers are still requested for them. God has answered and will continue to answer united prayers. The promise cannot fail. Where two or three are agreed, &c., &c."

OF A YOUNG MAN FROM CITY ISLAND.

This young man sought prayers for others, but in their spiritual welfare his own was included, as his statement shows.

"I feel it my privilege and duty," said he, "wherever I am, and on every suitable occasion, to bear testimony for the Lord Jesus. I am from City Island, about twenty-five miles from here. It has about four hundred inhabitants, and only about twenty of these are witnesses for Christ. I am here to ask you to pray for City Island. I am but very young in the Christian life. I came here some weeks ago and asked you to pray for this people. I felt so anxious for a revival that I got up here,

though I had no religion then, and asked you to pray for City Island.

“I went home, and the first thing I heard was, ‘When are you going to come out on the Lord’s side? Some of us have been praying for you ever since you have been gone.’ It went like a dagger to my heart, that while I was here asking you to pray for them, they should be praying for me. How strange! I was bowed down with sorrow. At length the Lord turned my sorrow into joy. I have gone on rejoicing ever since. I believe God heard your prayer for City Island, and first of all had mercy on me. Religion is all my joy now. I love its duties. I love to stand up for Jesus. I come again to ask you to pray for City Island, and pray also for me.”

FOR A BROTHER’S CONVERSION.

“I passed through this city a few days ago,” said a speaker, “and I sent up a request that you would pray for an unconverted brother. I sent it up to that desk, and when it was read I got up and stated that I had sent up that request for an unconverted brother, the only remaining one of a large family of brothers, out of the ark of safety. I told you I was going to see him. I had come from the west and was going east, a distance of one thousand miles in all, to see him. I felt very anxious about him, as the

only remaining one out of Christ, and alienated from us on account of some difficulty about the division of property. He would not write to us. I got into the cars praying. I rode on praying; I stopped and came here praying; I asked you to pray, and then I went on praying; and when I met him, oh! an answer had come to our prayers. He threw his arms around my neck and said, 'Oh! my brother! my brother! God has had mercy on my soul. Let me kiss you; let me fold you close to my heart.'

"And now I am on my way back to the west, but I felt as if I could not go through New York without coming to this meeting and telling you the story of my brother's conversion, and asking you to join with me in thanksgiving to God that he has answered our poor requests, when we had so little confidence in Him."

A thousand miles seems a long journey to take in order to see an alienated brother. But the warmth of Christian love makes nothing of distance or pains. And prayer, fervent prayer awakens hope even against hope.

OF A HUSBAND AND WIFE.

These persons evidently intended their paper to be one of acknowledgment and praise: yet in the ardour of their desire for more of the illuminating and sanctifying grace of the Spirit, they omitted to make specific

mention of the former, or even to use the word—thanks.

“A husband and wife recently hopefully converted, through the instrumentality of *this meeting*, ask your prayers on their behalf, for the enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit.”

OF A WORKING CHRISTIAN.

One day a brother in the lower room made this statement: “When a person presents a request for prayer, and that prayer is answered, it is his duty to communicate the fact for the encouragement of the meeting. I presented a request here some six weeks ago, that God would bless my efforts to establish a prayer meeting at a place in the country, where I was about to spend a season. The first week we had about 20 in attendance, second week about 30, third about 40, and last week about 100. The meetings have all been very solemn and interesting. There was very much emotion in the audience. Many were affected to tears, and the Holy Spirit was evidently operating on the hearts of the unconverted.”

A YOUNG MAN'S CONVERSION.

In this case the writer makes no mention of gratitude, but he certainly showed a fine appreciation of the mercy received by immediately asking for another of the same sort.

"Prayers are requested for a minister's son, in Joliet, Illinois, who is away from home and friends.

"The writer offered a similar case last Tuesday. Those prayers have been answered in the certain conversion of the young man in whose behalf they were asked."

FOR A NIECE.

One morning a gentleman called on the Meeting to unite with him in returning thanks for the conversion of his niece. This young lady had been highly educated, and had enjoyed very precious religious privileges, but now was apparently insensible to all serious impressions. She thought that her day of grace had been sinned away, and therefore gave herself up to the pleasures of the world, for, as she said, all that she was ever to enjoy must be enjoyed here—there was no hope for her hereafter. Consequently she determined to exhaust the cup of earthly delights, and let eternity bring to her what it would.

Such was her wretched, desperate purpose; but happily God's thoughts were not as her thoughts. She was a child of prayer. Her soul was borne before the Mercy Seat by her friends and the Christians of the Noon Meeting. In answer to these petitions she was made a subject of renewing grace, and came to the foot of the Cross. The change was thorough. From a victim of despair, tending steadily to ruin,

she became a humble and rejoicing spirit, an intelligent and consistent believer.

FOR THREE SISTERS.

A gentleman, a teller in a city bank, had three sisters for whose eternal welfare he was deeply concerned. Meeting a friend one day, he sent by him a request to the Noon Meeting, asking that prayer should be offered for their immediate conversion. Not long afterwards this friend reminded the Meeting of the circumstance, adding, "and now I am here to say that those three sisters are happy in the pardoning love of Jesus, and are rejoicing with that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory."

FOR A CONVERSION IN THE PENITENTIARY.

One Monday morning a speaker made a statement to this effect: "Three weeks ago I requested you to pray for a young woman in the Penitentiary, whom I had found in my Sabbath visitations to be in a very anxious state of mind. On going down to the Island yesterday, and into the Penitentiary, I found this young woman rejoicing in Christ. She felt that her sins had been forgiven her, and she appears very happy; and I come into your meeting to-day to tell you the good news for your encouragement."

FOR A FATHER AND THREE SISTERS.

“Christian Friends—A young man, who frequently attends this Meeting, desires you to return thanks for the conversion of his father and three sisters. All have been subjects of prayer.”

THE THREEFOLD MENTION.

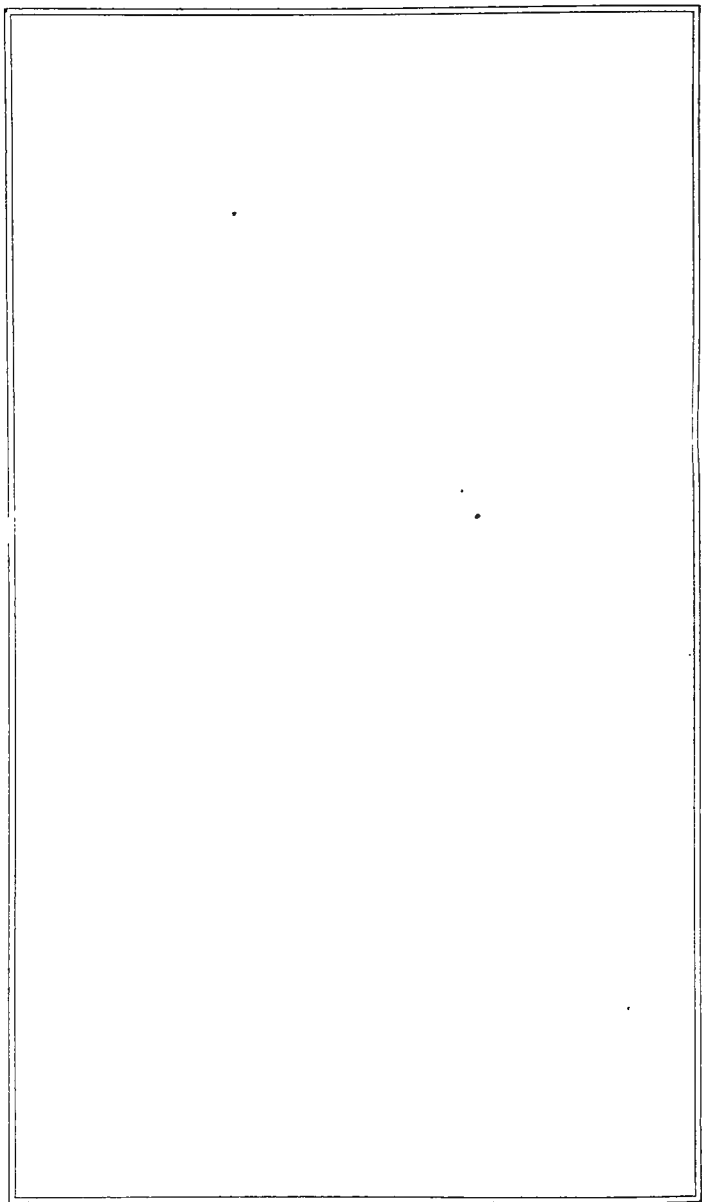
In the early part of the year, the prayers of the Meeting were requested for a young man of fine promise, the only child of parents who counted him their greatest earthly treasure. Bright, earnest and active, he was a great favourite with his friends, but being possessed of abundant means and connected with fashionable society, he was leading a life of splendid gaiety and worldliness. Under these circumstances, at the wish of his aged father, his case was mentioned for the first time.

Not long afterwards, a friend on behalf of the father called on the Meeting to return thanks to Almighty God for the conversion of this, his only son. It appeared that the young man had been induced to attend the Noon gathering. There his hard heart was softened. There he experienced the gentle but powerful influences of the Holy Spirit, and there he at last found joy and peace in believing. And now turning his back upon the gay world and its deceitful vanities, he was full of love to Christ and anxious only to do good. Overjoyed in the contemplation of

this change, the father felt that he could not go away from New York to his distant home, without offering thanks to the Lord for his unspeakable goodness. And so the case was mentioned a second time.

Some weeks had elapsed when the same friend who had announced the young man's conversion, rose to announce that he slept, yes slept the sleep that knows no waking. By the accidental discharge of a gun, in North Carolina, whither he had gone on business, he was called away without a moment's warning. But his was not the terrible end it would have been, had he died without an interest in Christ. His Christian experience, though short, was enough to prepare him for the heavenly sanctuary and for the society of the blessed. Before leaving New York for the South he had connected himself with God's people, doing it then for the express reason, as he himself stated, that inasmuch as he was about to reside for a time in a part of the country which was destitute of religious privileges, he supposed, that as a member of the Church he could be more useful in establishing prayer meetings and Sunday schools. Thus his case came before the Meeting a third time.

Surely the thanks of the father would have been even more heartfelt and glowing, had he known that when his son was converted, it was literally Now or Never.



CHAPTER X.

Answers to Prayer.

It was to be expected that when earnest and repeated prayers were so perseveringly offered for specific objects, all this exercise of faith and zeal should not prove vain. Many of the habitual attendants of the Meetings were men given to devotion, abundant in prayers. They prayed in faith. They believed the promises. They expected their fulfilment. They took the fact that God had put it into the hearts of so many of his people to come together day after day to unite in supplication for their common wants, as evidence that there were blessings in store for the believing. This produced an unusual fervour and directness in the devotional exercises. Men pleaded, importuned, wrestled, and, as we shall see, prevailed. This prevalence reacted on the minds and hearts of the petitioners and gave new energy to their subsequent supplications. He who heard them once might well be expected to hear them again. He who was

able before to work miracles of grace was still as able, for they held with the Apostle that his ability was "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

Many of the answers to supplications sent up from the Fulton street Meeting, never have been, and doubtless in this world never will be, made known to those who offered them. In many other cases, the answer has been made known, but no record was kept of the fact, and thus it has faded from the memory of all but the parties immediately concerned. Yet enough have been preserved and remembered to furnish remarkable illustrations of the Faithfulness of God and the Power of Prayer.

Some of these are subjoined.

A FATHER FOR HIS SONS.

"A father," said one of the speakers, "had three sons in distant and different parts of the country, all unconverted. He brought them to the Meeting as subjects of prayer. They were prayed for as only those who believe can pray. What has been the consequence? Three letters have been received from these three sons, who have not communicated with each other—each giving an account of his own conversion."

In a similar case, the father brought before the Meeting the welfare of his son far away in the distant Pacific; and in accordance with his request fervent

prayers were offered. In due season the son returned home, and it was found that he had been converted not only in mid-ocean, but also about the very time that he was made a subject of prayer. In stating this fact, the father said, "I determined at the time to note down the date of the prayer meeting at which my son was remembered, and I have no reason to doubt that the prayers of God's people were answered. It is wonderful. Away at that distance God called his attention to religion, convinced him of his guilt, led him to Christ, and the very first thing he had to tell me on landing was, what the Lord had done for his soul. He knew nothing of our prayer meetings. He did not know that he had been made the subject of special prayer, and yet the Lord has made him the subject of special grace."

A WIFE FOR HER HUSBAND.

On the 7th of July last, a lady tarried after the Prayer Meeting to say that she wished to have a request written, to be presented next day for prayer for the conversion of her husband, in Wisconsin. She said she did not know that she would be present, but she would try to be. She was present, and heard the prayer offered. She then went to stay two weeks at Yonkers. After the lapse of that time, she returned home to Wisconsin. On arriving home, her hus-

band, among other things, said to her, "I have set up family worship since you went away."

"Ah! when did you commence?"

"Some time back."

"Well, I had your case made a subject of prayer at the Union Prayer Meeting, Fulton street, when I was in New York."

"Oh, did you, and on what day was it?"

At first she could not remember the exact day. But after some reflection recalled it, and said,

"It was on the 8th of July."

"Why, that was the very day on which God had mercy on my soul!"

This lady has lately written a letter to a friend here, full of grateful acknowledgments, through whom these facts have been communicated to the Meeting. "Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear." "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you."

A PIOUS MOTHER ANSWERED.

Twenty five years ago a Christian lady died, leaving a lad thirteen years of age. To this child she had been very faithful, and he had often felt her tears raining down on his hands as she knelt beside him or over him in prayer. But he grew up careless and unconcerned about spiritual things, and continued

so for years. He always declined attending a noon prayer meeting and had been spending the whole of the recent summer amid the gay scenes of Newport. But upon his return to the city, by a relative's persuasions he was induced to attend the prayer meeting held every Lord's day evening in the lecture room of the North Dutch Church. While there the Spirit of God fell upon him with great power. His heart and conscience were thoroughly awakened. He passed the night in great distress of mind, and in the morning sent for his brother-in-law, the relative before referred to, who found him on his knees, in a flood of tears, calling on God for mercy.

This gentleman, after praying and conversing with him, brought him to the Noon Meeting, where his story was narrated, and fervent supplications offered on his behalf. The next day (Tuesday) he came again to the Noon Meeting, where his case was again remembered. At the close the minister, (one of the Collegiate pastors), who led the service on that day, was introduced to him, and at his request suggested such counsel and direction as seemed adapted to his situation. The sequel is shown by the following paper, which the changed man of his own accord prepared and sent in to the Meeting on the next day.

"The brother-in-law, for whom prayers have been offered in this room, desires to add his testimony to the efficacy of prayer. He humbly trusts, through

the merits of a dying Saviour, that he has been hopefully converted; and he earnestly requests the continued prayer of this Meeting that his faith may be strengthened in the Lord."

He has since continued joyfully in the service of his newly-found Saviour. He has entered upon the legacy left him so long before—the inestimable legacy of a mother's prayers.

A FATHER ANSWERED.

A few weeks since a gentleman expressed great pleasure in informing the Meeting that a brother had called at his place of business on that very morning, and with an unusually happy face, exclaimed, "My son for whom I have prayed so long, is at last under conviction of sin. His sister has prayed earnestly for him that he might be brought to Christ. For three months he has been suffering from a sense of his unworthiness, but never told his nearest and dearest friends. Yesterday he met an acquaintance who urged him to visit the theatre in the evening, in his company. He promised to go. After they separated, he thought, 'I had resolved to go to the prayer meeting this evening; I do not know about going to the theatre. This may be the last opportunity I may ever have of attending such a prayer meeting; I must not lose it—I will not.' He resolved not to go to the theatre, but to go to the prayer meeting. He

did so, and was so convinced of his sins, and of his need of a Saviour, that he rose in that very prayer meeting, and related the experience he had passed through, in terms so touching that there was scarcely a dry eye in the house. That son," said the gentleman speaking, "is now in this room for the first time."

A DYING SAINT ANSWERED.

The following case, although not having an immediate connection with the Fulton street Meeting, may find a place here, since it occurred in the author's presence.

One morning in February, 1858, a minister was called to visit a parishioner, who, it was feared, would hardly survive the day. The young lady had been long slowly declining in health and strength, but was well prepared for her latter end. Having many years before learned to love and serve the Saviour, she was quite willing to leave this world and go to that blessed land where Christ reveals himself face to face to his chosen, and they know even as they are known, and love even as they are loved. But while thus without fear as to what succeeds death, this peaceful Christian had no small trepidation as to the pang of dissolution. Like Dr. Conyers, of whom John Newton speaks, she "though not afraid of death, was often afraid of dying." She had a painful apprehension of the possible forerunners and concomitants of a dying hour.

On this account her pastor, as he knelt at her bedside, fervently implored that the Lord would overcome the anxieties of his handmaid, and if it pleased him, would kindly vouchsafe to her an easy, tranquil passage through the dark valley. On rising from his knees the minister, observing her to be breathing peacefully, addressed a word or two to some of the friends standing by, and then bade the sick lady good morning, with the promise of returning in the afternoon. But as he took her hand in his, he found it cold; her lips did not move in reply; and on examination they found to their amazement that her pulse had ceased to beat. Thus in a moment, without a struggle or a gasp, with no outward sign whatever, so quietly that not even the sister whose hands supported her head perceived the fact, she passed away from earth and entered the eternal rest. No groans, no pangs, no dying strife, but calmly, sweetly as a babe shuts its eyes upon its mother's breast, even so did this worn and emaciated believer fall asleep in Jesus. So quick was the transition that she could hardly herself have been aware of it. In the twinkling of an eye her ransomed soul left the clay tenement, and was with God. Gratefully the surviving friends recognize the Divine goodness and faithfulness which so speedily and amply answered their prayer. While they were yet speaking, the Lord heard. His direction to us is

still and always, "only believe;" for believing, we shall receive when we ask.

A COLORED WOMAN'S FAITH.

This woman, according to the statement by a gentleman one day occupying the leader's chair, was a member of one of the Presbyterian Churches in this city, and as such held in high esteem for her consistent walk and pious zeal. One of the illustrations of her triumphant faith and persevering devotion was contained in the fact, that fully believing in the promises made to earnest prayer, she determined, in an humble earnest way to select twenty of her acquaintances and pray earnestly for their salvation. She kept her resolution, made the selections, prayed without ceasing for their conversion, and in the end had the blessed satisfaction of believing that they had all embraced the Saviour.

THE PRAYING WIVES.

A pastor from the interior stated to the Meeting, that in the Church to which he ministered there were twenty-five ladies whose husbands were not pious. They met and spoke one to another of the fact, and of their duty in view of it, and agreed to meet weekly for special prayer for their companions. This practice was kept up, as we understood, for some time. The pastor said that on the

Sabbath before he left home for his summer vacation, he had the happiness to receive the last of the twenty-five husbands into the Church.

THE SEVEN PRAYING WIVES.

Another time, a clergyman present spoke of seven praying women, all of whom had unconverted husbands. These wives met stately for prayer for the conversion of their husbands. They prayed on for ten years, and received no answers to their prayers, and then many were for giving up, discouraged and disheartened from the long delay of the blessing sought. One poor Irish woman, ignorant in the instruction of this world, but abundantly instructed in the teachings of the Holy Spirit, said, "we must not give up our meeting. Do you not know that God is faithful to all his promises? He has never said 'Seek ye my face' in vain." So they prayed on three years more, and all their children were converted, their husbands were converted, the Lord poured out his Spirit in great power, and their friends and neighbours were converted. The Church received large accessions, and the Lord turned almost the whole people to himself.

THE ENRAGED MOTHER.

A young lad came to the Meeting one day and stated that he had been brought up a Roman Catholic,

but by the blessing of God had been converted. He felt strong in the faith. Christ was so precious to him that he would and must continue in His service. But he had a most painful trial. His mother was exceedingly annoyed by his conversion. Indeed she was so indignant that she would not remain under the same roof with him, but had even left the city and gone to reside in Baltimore. This sore cross did not shake the steadfast faith of the young confessor. But he entreated the Meeting to join their prayers with his, that converting grace might be bestowed upon his mother. His request was complied with. Ere long the joyful intelligence came that the prayer was answered and the mother brought to the Saviour. In Baltimore her heart was changed and very soon she returned to her son. Both united in praise to redeeming love and are now happily living together just across the East river.

A SERIES OF ANSWERS.

The following most remarkable statement has been obtained for the author, by his esteemed friend, the Rev. Dr. GILLETTE, of this city, whose name is a sufficient guarantee for the strict accuracy of the account.

A young man, who all his life had been averse to either hearing or being spoken to on the subject of religion, was at last impelled to visit the Fulton street Meeting; and through a friend prayers were

offered in his behalf. From that day he experienced an entire change of heart.

Not two days had elapsed ere he sent in a petition that earnest prayer might be offered for an intimate companion, with whom for years he had been associated in sinful pleasures. Prayers were offered ; and the next time he met that young friend he found him under deep conviction. Now he is rejoicing in a sure hope in Christ.

Not one week later this same young man offered a request that a fervent appeal might be made to God in behalf of two friends of his, a brother and sister, the only children of a pious widow, whose heart was ever yearning that they might become the children of God. One of our leading ministers arose and offered a special prayer for that brother and sister. The same night both became aware of their need of pardon, and were anxiously enquiring, ‘ what shall we do to be saved ? ’ And now both are come out on the Lord’s side.

All these persons had been for years wedded to the fleeting pleasures of the world, and every influence that had been brought to bear upon them to induce them to change their course of life, seemed useless, until these earnest appeals to God were poured forth.

G. E. S.

ANOTHER SERIES—ALL NIGHT IN PRAYER.

In the month of March last, W. M., who had long been a wanderer from the fold of Christ, was graciously restored to the service and enjoyment of God by the Divine blessing upon the noon meetings which he attended.

At once he began to feel an intense desire for the conversion of his impenitent friends and relations, especially his father, now aged and in infirm health. Accordingly he set off for his residence, an inland town in Massachusetts. Entering a steamboat on Long Island Sound, he engaged in prayer for his father, and continued wrestling all night long, for his anxiety was so great that he could get no sleep. On his arrival, his mother met him at the door, and told him that his father was a changed man. It appears that for some time before the old gentleman had been awakened, and sought counsel from his wife, anxiously enquiring if there was any hope for such a sinner as he was. These convictions continued until the night when his son was wrestling for him in the steamboat, and that very night he found peace in believing on the Saviour. The first evening after his arrival, the son took down the Bible and said, "Father, let us read a chapter in the Bible, and pray." "Certainly," said the father; "you read." After reading, without waiting for the son, the father began to

pray—pouring forth such fervent supplications as he had scarcely ever heard before. It was the first outgoings of the new-born soul.

The son having remained for three days at the paternal home, during which many earnest prayers were offered for their unconverted friends, especially a sister, an uncle and a cousin, went eastward to see his sister. He told her of God's mercy to their father, and of their united prayers for her soul, and entreated her to give herself to Christ. He and the other pious members of the household held a family prayer meeting, at which she was present. There she became much under concern, and set about seeking the salvation of her soul with all diligence. The next day, the son returning to his father, took back the joyful intelligence that the sister who was lost was found.

While at his father's residence, the son wrote to his uncle, informing him of the joint entreaties made for him, and urging him to become a Christian. Ten days after came a reply, in which the uncle expressed his surprise, that while his friends eighty miles away were praying for him, he should be led to pray for himself. Those prayers, he said, had been answered, for he had obtained the pearl of great price.

While W. M. was in his father's neighbourhood, he attended some prayer meetings there. At one of

these a young man arose, and asked an interest in the prayers of Christians. They prayed for him and he was exhorted to pray for himself, which he did that night for the first time. Two days after he was rejoicing in hope.

A young lady in the same vicinity, was at the request of her mother, made the subject of special prayer and personal entreaty by W. M. Upon closing the interview he received her thanks, and after his return to New York was gratified by the intelligence of her conversion. Since that period she has been brought to death's door, but her faith did not waver under the severe trial.

On arriving at New York, the son at once sought out his cousin and informed him of the prayers which had been offered in his behalf. His cousin immediately replied that he had been converted and was cherishing a Christian hope. This hope continued firm and bright even to the end, which came very suddenly about three months afterwards. While accompanying his remains to his uncle's house, W. M. met a young man in the cars of just his cousin's age, nineteen years. Speaking of the melancholy errand upon which he was then engaged, he reminded the young man of the uncertainty of life and of the claims of the Saviour, and upon parting gave him some tracts, and urged him not to forget the all-important subject. The young man asked his new

found friend to pray for him, which he did of course with much fervour. Some weeks afterwards W. M. had a letter from him, stating that he had become a disciple of Christ and had entered an institution of learning with a view of preparing himself for the ministry.

W. M. thinks that he has good reason, from experience and observation, to believe that God answers prayer. Thus believing he feels it a duty, whenever opportunity is afforded, to speak a word for Christ, and then ask God's blessing upon the word.

FORTY-FIVE YEARS OF PRAYER.

An aged mother in Israel, in sending in a request for prayer for a number of grand-children, prefaced it by the following remarkable statement :

“Mothers of ‘only sons’ pray on. For forty-five years, one now present, the mother of an only son, prayed for his conversion, and in this blessed revival the Lord brought him into the visible Church.

“Pray and never cease.”

IS NOT MY HUSBAND TO BE SAVED ?

The following statement produced a deep impression the day it was made in the Meeting. It was given in the narrator's own words.

“As I was leaving the Prayer Meeting, when I had gone a little distance, a lady came rushing up to me

and exclaimed : ‘ Oh ! my brother ; my brother. Oh ! is not my husband to be saved ? I have put in a request that he might be prayed for, three times ; and three times this request has been read ; and in each case no allusion has been made to my case in the prayers which followed. My husband has not been prayed for. What does it mean ?’

“ I said to her : ‘ suppose you keep on praying for him. I will pray for him. I will speak to others to pray for him. We will carry his case to other places of prayer.’

“ The heart of this wife was very much encouraged. When I met her again I inquired, ‘ Is your husband converted yet ?’

“ ‘ Oh ! no, he is not converted ; but I believe he will be. My husband is certainly to be a Christian. I feel assured he will be.’

“ In a few days I met her again. I asked her : ‘ Is that husband of yours a Christian yet !’

“ ‘ Oh ! I am afraid not. I have been praying and hoping, and believing. I am so distressed with anxiety for him, that I have had to give up all attention to all household duties. I cannot oversee my house. My hope is in God, and I will trust in *him*, for vain is the help of man.’

“ A few days after, I met the same wife again.

“ ‘ Is your husband converted yet ?’ Her countenance lighted with a spiritual, serene and holy joy.

“ ‘Oh ! yes, I hope my husband is converted. He came home from his business. He ran to me, threw his arms around my neck, and in weeping rapture exclaimed, ‘Oh ! I have found the Saviour. I have given myself up to him, and on the very next Sabbath I am to unite myself to the people of God. I am with you now for time and eternity.’ ”

“ ‘I asked him where he was,’ said the wife, ‘when he experienced the change,’ He answered, ‘In the Fulton street Prayer Meeting.’ And this was the first knowledge I had that he ever attended the Fulton street Prayer Meetings at all. So while I was praying, he was going to the place of prayer, where the Lord met him in his mercy.’ ”

“ ‘Were I to name him,’ continued the speaker, ‘you would all know him, for he is a marked and eminent man in this city.’ ”

The tears were flowing freely all around the room.

“ ‘Now just mark one thing,’ said the same voice, ‘how God by the Spirit supported the faith of this humble, feeble believer ; and how at the same time he broke her off from all human reliance, that the excellency of the power might be of God and not of man.’ ”

AN ANSWER DELAYED BUT SURE.

In the year 1836, a Christian lady died in the triumph of faith. She had been remarkable for her

intelligent piety. Enjoying from the earliest years the benefit of faithful catechetical instructions, she improved them so well that her pastor, the late Dr. Milledoler, said that "her acquaintance with spiritual things exceeded that of any other child we ever conversed with."

After a short but useful career this lady was called to die, leaving behind her a fatherless boy of nine years. She gave him into the charge of pious relatives with many tender injunctions to himself and many earnest prayers for him. Those prayers lay long unanswered. The lad grew up to manhood, married and settled in life. He was amiable, upright, moral, a good citizen and a kind neighbour, but a stranger to Christ, and wholly destitute of serious thoughts. In the first months of the present autumn, the conversion of a near connection fell upon him like a bolt from heaven. All at once he became intensely interested in religious things, and diligently used every means of grace. Especially did he avail himself of the Noon Meeting in the North Dutch Church. Before, he had never attended one of them, being as he said and supposed too busy; but now, although overwhelmed with engagements, he carefully planned the disposition of his time so as to allow him the opportunity to join God's people in their mid-day devotions. Seeking God thus with all his heart he found him, and became through grace a thorough

and decided Christian. Then he recalled with joy the prayers of his mother, now so many years in heaven, and felt that he was experiencing the answer to those fervent supplications.

THE CLERGYMAN'S SON.

At a meeting in October, the following was related as having occurred at a prayer meeting in Philadelphia :

“A written request was handed to the leader of the meeting, that prayer might be offered to the Throne of Grace for the conversion of the son of an aged clergyman. A pastor, well stricken in years, who had long been praying that his own son might be led to see the error of his ways and be brought to the feet of Jesus, rose and made earnest supplication to God that ‘this son of an aged clergyman’ might be brought to seek redemption through a dying and risen Saviour. His own son, unknown to him, sat in the same room, some distance behind him. This son had been walking through the street, and seeing a great crowd entering the door of the meeting, out of mere idle curiosity was induced to enter and take a seat. And there he heard his own father praying for the conversion of just such a son, and just such a sinner as he himself was. He left the meeting in great distress of mind, could not think of sleep, but walked the streets the whole night. Sometimes he would sit

down on the steps of the house whose owner he knew was a Christian, and ponder within himself whether he had not better ring the bell, rouse up the family out of sleep, and beg them to pray for him. It was with difficulty that he could persuade himself that it was an unseasonable hour, and that even though he feared the 'wrath to come,' he must wait till morning before any would pray for him.

"At length morning came. He returned as a prodigal to his father's house, and, through God's grace and mercy, was enabled to humble himself before God, and give up his evil courses, and enlist in the service of Christ, who suffered on the cross, that sinners like him might be saved. That same son of an aged clergyman is now daily employed in persuading sinners, such as he lately was, to come to Christ. That same son, who went into the prayer meeting, attracted out of mere idle curiosity, is now seen daily in the Union Prayer Meeting, ready to take his part in the work and duty of prayer. How changed from the night he walked the streets in agony of mind—now rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory!"

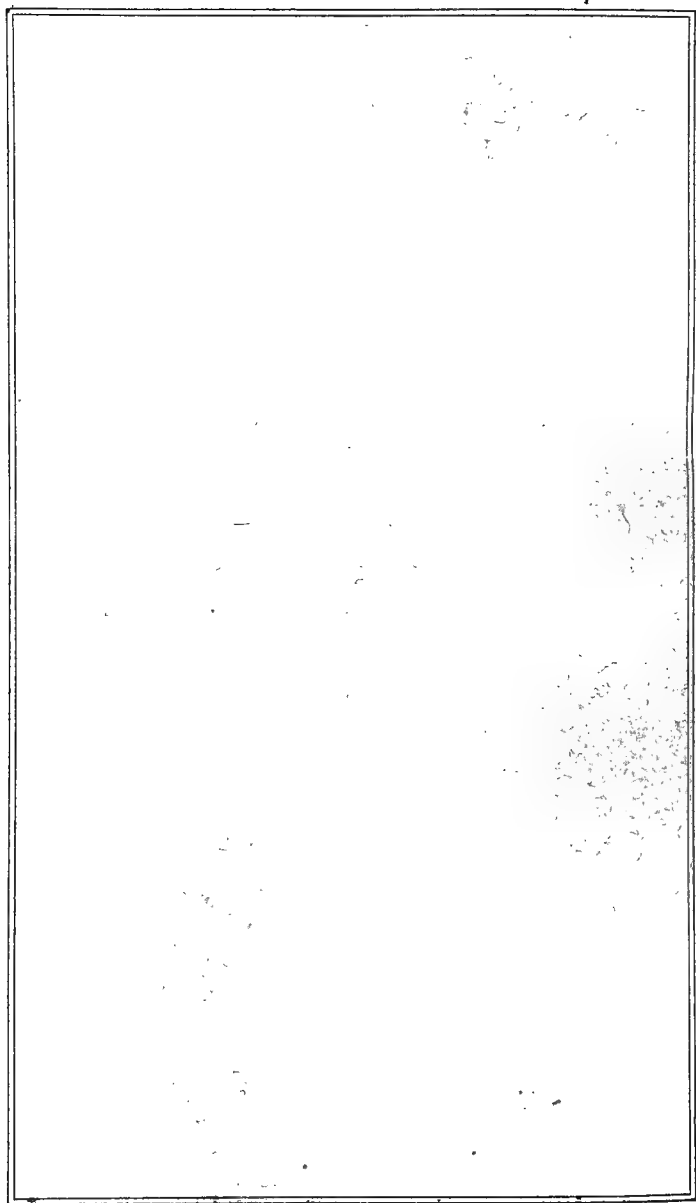
AN OLD MAN'S PRAYER ANSWERED.

The Rev. Dr. Taylor, of Bergen, N. J., at one of the meetings held in the Consistory Room, narrated the following circumstances "as an encouragement for parents to pray for their children:"

“Many years ago an old man, a devoted Christian, started a prayer meeting, which is still continued, having resulted in many and glorious fruits. As a pastor it was my privilege to be with him, particularly during his last illness. In several visits made to this house I found him on the mount, looking over on to the Land of Promise. Finding nothing seemingly to mar his comfort or interrupt his joy, one morning as I went to his dwelling, (he was a poor man, and lived in straitened circumstances,) I determined to satisfy myself whether there was nothing that gave him any trouble of heart. On entering his chamber, I asked him in simple terms, ‘How are you this morning?’ ‘Oh, sir,’ said he, ‘I am well; why should I not be well? I am near home. Yes, I am near home—near heaven.’ I took the opportunity to ask him, ‘My dear sir, has there been nothing of late resting upon your heart as an occasion of trouble?’ He spoke not a word, but turned his head over to the wall, and lay so between five and ten minutes; then he rolled his head back upon his pillow, with his face towards me, and I saw the tears streaming down his cheeks. ‘Oh, yes, sir,’ said he, ‘there is one great trouble.’ ‘What is it?’ I inquired. ‘Speak your whole mind to me freely.’ ‘Well,’ said he, ‘I have ten children, and I have prayed to God for more than thirty years, that I might see one or more of them converted before I die; but he has denied me.

They are all grown up, as you know, but are not yet Christians.' 'How do you get over that trouble?' I asked. 'Ah!' he replied, 'I get over it as I get over all other troubles—by rolling it over upon Christ. I know that God means to answer my prayers, but he means to wait till I am gone. But he will do it; I know he will: my children will be converted.'

"This man has been in his grave for fifteen years, and I have watched over his children ever since his death; and now to-day I am able to say that seven out of the ten have been born into the Kingdom of God, and that the eighth has also just experienced conversion. This is the answer to his prayer! God did not forget; he only waited; and in like manner he will answer the prayers of all parents who pray in faith for the conversion of their children. Let us, therefore, take courage, and lay hold upon the precious promises of God."



CHAPTER XI.

Instances of Conversion.

THE number of conversions to God wrought by the Holy Spirit through the agency of the Noon Meeting will never be known. But it must be great. The services have never been attended on any two days by precisely the same individuals. At every successive meeting new faces have appeared, drawn of course by very various motives, but all decorous and attentive. Of this immense multitude there is reason to suppose that many more than have come to our knowledge, have received indelible impressions of eternal things. But they have gone their way, and are seen no more. "The day will declare" whether they have been led to the Saviour or not—a question infinitely more important to them than to us. There is, however, no need of speculating on this point. The ascertained results in many cases indicate that the Lord has bestowed a peculiar blessing upon the Christians who call upon God every day at noon.

The subjoined illustrations, however, are not confined to this class, but include several cases of conversions wrought by other means, although first brought to the public eye by statements made at the Noon Meeting.

A SAILOR.

A tract visitor once gave this account of a convert whom he found on board the Vanderbilt :

“In the course of my tract distribution I often go on vessels to give the sailors some tracts, and leave others in the forecastle. For however fine a library you may have in the cabin, and however many religious books there may be aft, the sailor will seldom peruse them, for fear of the ridicule of his shipmates if he asks for one. Now, leave them where he *lives*, forward in the forecastle, and when he gets leisure time there is no class of men more fond of reading than the sailor. Sailors will select the best reader of their number, and then, seated or standing, they will tell him to ‘heave ahead.’ I went on board the Vanderbilt, a few days ago, on my usual errand, when a young man stepped up to me and asked for some tracts. I said, ‘Do you love to read them?’ He replied, ‘These and the Bible are food for my soul.’ ‘Then,’ said I, ‘you are a brother in Christ.’ ‘Thank God, yes, though I have not been so long. I trust in Christ’s saving merits.’ In further conversation with him, I learned that the means of his conversion had

been his attendance at the Fulton street Prayer Meeting."

THE WRITER FOR THE SUNDAY PRESS.

One day last summer, a gentleman of considerable gifts and culture, who was connected with one of the Sunday newspapers, wandered into the Meeting in the Consistory building. He can imagine no motive for doing so. He had no love for a place of prayer. He had no interest whatever in religion. He was not conscious even of any curiosity to see or hear what was done in the Noon Meetings. Yet through some unaccountable impulse he came in and took a seat near the desk. In the course of the Meeting he became deeply interested, and when it closed, with tears in his eyes he besought the brethren in charge to tell him what he must do. The Missionary took him to the Rev. Dr. Cutler, the excellent rector of St. Ann's, Brooklyn, who had conducted the Meeting that day. The Doctor, himself deeply moved by the occurrence, opening the Bible which lay before him, read to the stricken sinner the precious invitations and promises of the Gospel, and pointed him to the Lamb of God. The next day the awakened man returned to the Meeting, and sent up to the desk a request for the prayers of God's people. Afterwards he expressed the hope that his sins were pardoned by the blood of Christ.

CONVERSION IN A RAIL ROAD CAR.

Once when the Lay Missionary was getting into a Sixth avenue rail road car, he said to the conductor, in his quiet, unobtrusive way,

"Will you take a tract?"

"Certainly, I will, and be thankful for it."

"Are you a Christian?"

"I hope I am."

"Where did you become a Christian?"

"In this rail road car."

"How was that?"

"Why you see I could not go to the prayer meetings. I had to stand here all day. I felt very much concerned about my soul. I was bowed down with sorrow. I did not know what to do; and so I just gave myself up to God, right here in the car. I cried to him for mercy, and mercy came quick. Oh! what joy I had, and none knew any thing about it. God can forgive sins in the rail road car as well as any where else. I am thankful for the tracts, sir. It was these that first convicted me of sin, and it was these that led me to Christ." Who will distribute tracts?

"MET CHRIST AT THE WHEEL."

A Swedish sailor, who spoke only broken English, addressed the Meeting. The Holy Spirit overtook him away in mid-ocean. He pursued him day and

night, and would give him no rest. "I was ready to cry out," said he, "who will deliver me? Who will help me? And my heart sunk down in despair. Oh! what a miserable sinner I felt I was. My heart was sick and sore. I knew not what to do. I had no one to guide me. What was to become of me?"

"One night, as I was standing at the wheel, I be-thought me of Christ, and my heart turned to him for help. And with my very first thoughts of Him he met me at the wheel—and oh! what words of love and mercy he spoke to me there at the wheel. 'Come to me, ye heavy laden; come to me; I cast none out. I am meek and lowly of heart. Learn of me; take my yoke: it is easy. Take my burden; my grace shall make it light!'

"There at the wheel, in the dark and solemn hour, the Saviour showed himself to me. I love Him because he first loved me. I cannot speak your language well. But Christ understands me, and I understand Him. And ever since I met Him at the wheel—poor sinner's friend—I live very close to Him. I hear Him tell me to hold up my sails to the gales of the blessed Spirit, and He will waft me straight to heaven."

FOUND CHRIST IN THE PARLOUR.

The following case was related in the second story-room of the Consistory building. It furnishes a strik-

ing contrast in its outward circumstances to the instance mentioned in Chapter VII. of "the man who found Christ at the lamp post."

The case is that of a young man, intelligent, worthy, occupying a high social position, married to a gay, fashionable wife, living in one of the fashionable avenues; himself, wife, and one sister making up the family. All were devoted to the pleasures of the world.

In the progress of this revival, the young man was brought under the power of the influences of the Holy Spirit. For many days he was sad and sorrowful, and his wife and sister knew not what to make of it. At length, however, in one of the prayer meetings he found joy and peace in believing in Jesus. Going home, he said to himself, "Now I must serve the Lord Jesus, and I will begin at once. I must go home and tell what the Lord has done for me and pray in my family." The tempter said:

"Not to-night, not so soon. Wait till you get a little stronger. Wait a few days."

"No, no," said the young disciple. "I must begin at once. I must pray in my family to-night."

"Do not be in such a hurry," said the tempter. "You have never known much about prayer. You do not know the language of prayer. You will certainly fail."

“Get thee behind me Satan, I must pray and I will pray. And I will pray to-night.”

When he went into his house he sought his library and there poured out his heart to the blessed Saviour in earnest entreaty for grace to acknowledge, and own, and honour him.

He went into his sumptuously furnished parlour. The gas was shedding down its mellow light from the burners. The wife and the sister were there. The time for prayer had come. His wife noticed with a kind of awe a great change in his countenance, but said nothing. This was a wife whom he loved as he did his own soul. He turned to her and said:

“My dear, have you any objection to our having family worship?”

She looked at him with amazement and hesitation for a moment, and then answered with true good breeding and politeness:

“Certainly not, if it is your pleasure.”

“Then get the Bible, if you please, and draw up around this table, under the gas light, and we will read and pray.”

He read—and then he kneeled down to pray. But he observed that he alone was kneeling, and his wife and sister remained sitting both upright in their seats. This disconcerted him for a moment—and he felt as if the tempter’s prophecy had come true.

At length he burst forth in the imploring cry,

“God be merciful to me, a sinner!” The tongue was loosed now, and he poured out a most fervent, agonizing, earnest prayer that God would have mercy upon his dear wife and sister, and convert them on the spot. As he went on, the heart of the wife was overcome. She slipped down from her seat—knelt beside him—put her arms around his neck—and ere she was aware of it, she too was crying to God to have mercy on her soul. His sister went and knelt by his other side. She, too, put her arms around him. She, too, sought a Saviour’s mighty power to save. All three, on the spot, in answer to that first family prayer, were brought to consecrate themselves to the service of Him who is willing and ready and mighty to save.

The peace of that now happy, but once gay and thoughtless family, flows like a river, and their salvation as an overflowing stream.

THE CONVERSION OF A SCOFFER.

It has justly been remarked that no instance has yet been known of a man attending any of the Noon Meetings and then going away to mock at and ridicule them. There is in general so much that is solemn and impressive in the aspect of such a meeting, such a spiritual atmosphere pervading the room, that only the most hardened can fail to feel or observe it. During the last summer a wicked young man from a western city—a scoffer at all religion—came to New

York. Before leaving home, he boasted to his wicked and ungodly companions that he intended to attend the Fulton street Prayer Meetings when he got here, and on returning home they would have some jolly times over the exhibition of what he might see and hear. With such views and feelings, he set out upon his journey. Long, however, before he got here he became serious—then convinced—and when he arrived he was in great distress of mind. He came to the Prayer Meetings, as he had said, but not to gather materials for scoffing—it was only to ask prayer for himself as a poor, miserable, perishing sinner. Here he found peace in believing, and he went home a converted man—to preach to his associates that very Gospel he had despised.

So God makes the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder he will restrain.

THE INTENDING SUICIDE CONVERTED.

On the 23d of last September, the day on which the anniversary of the Noon Meeting was held in the North Dutch Church, a man passing along the street had his attention arrested by the crowds streaming from every direction into the venerable edifice. Curiosity led him to follow them, and entering the building, what he saw and heard there changed the whole current of his thoughts. He had been contemplating two awful crimes. But now he was awakened to a

sense of his condition. He became convinced of the wickedness of his heart and life. The next day he came to the Noon Meeting and also on the following day, Saturday, when of his own accord and in his own handwriting he sent up to the desk this request :

“The prayers of this Meeting are respectfully requested for G. B——, who has lived all his life in wickedness, and only a few days ago contemplated suicide, and the great crime of murder, in hopes of ending his misery.”

The next evening he attended the Prayer Meeting, which, conducted in much the same free and spontaneous manner as the Noon Daily Meeting, is held in the lecture room. In the course of the exercises one of the brethren was delivering a fervent exhortation and urging the duty of repentance, when suddenly he was startled by a despairing cry from one of the audience, “Oh ! what shall I do to be saved !” It was the poor would-be murderer and suicide, fallen on his knees and crying for mercy. Just then another poor creature near him rose, and with tears streaming down his cheeks, asked the Meeting to sing for him the well known hymn of Toplady :

“Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.”

At the conclusion of the exercises, both these men were privately conversed with and directed to go just

as they were, with all their load of guilt upon them, to the Lord Jesus Christ. There is reason to believe that both have done so.

G.B., although a very ungodly man, was not a convict or a criminal. But in intention and purpose he was guilty of the highest crimes. He was asked once, "Did you really intend to commit murder and then suicide?"

"I really did."

"Whom did you intend to murder?"

"A woman who has greatly wronged me; and to be revenged I intended to kill her."

"And what then?"

"Suicide and eternal damnation."

"Have you any such feelings now?"

"Not the least."

"What saved you from the crimes you intended to commit?"

"The recollection of my poor mother's prayers." And now his chin quivered, and his eyes filled with tears.

"Have you ever committed a crime, and been imprisoned?"

"Never," said he, with great emphasis and firmness.

The author has recently conversed with this man, and found him in a very humble, peaceful state of mind, as far removed as possible from the gloomy, bitter, revengeful, despairing frame in which he was

when the anniversary meeting arrested his downward course. He always speaks with great tenderness and gratitude of the prayers and counsels of his mother, who died when he was very young. For a long time the influence of her early inculcations had passed from his mind, so that he was wholly without God in the world, but at the critical moment the memory of them revived and he was made sharer of like precious faith with her own.

CONVERSIONS IN KALAMAZOO, MICH.

The following account was given in one of the Noon Meetings by a gentleman who had been actively engaged in the good work :

“ We heard of the wonderful work of grace in this city and in other parts of the land. We thought we ought to share in it and not stand idly by. Still we had no such feeling as was here. We appointed a daily prayer meeting however. Episcopalians, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists, all united. We appointed our first Union Prayer Meeting in much fear and trembling. We did not know how it would work. We did not know that any body would come. We did not know how the measure would be regarded. At our very first meeting some one put in such a request as this : ‘ A praying wife requests the prayers of this meeting for her unconverted husband, that he may be converted and made

an humble disciple of the Lord Jesus.' All at once a stout burly man arose and said, 'I am that man, I have a pious praying wife, and this request must be for me. I want you to pray for me.' As soon as he sat down, in the midst of sobs and tears, another man arose and said, 'I am that man, I have a praying wife. She prays for me. And now she asked you to pray for me. I am sure I am that man, and I want you to pray for me.'

"Three, four or five more arose and said, 'we want you to pray for us too.' The power of God was upon the little assembly. The Lord appeared for us, and that right early. We had hardly begun and he was in the midst of us in great and wonderful grace. Thus the revival began. We number from four hundred to five hundred conversions."

The same gentleman related the singular story of

THE OMNIBUS OWNER.

"He owned a line of omnibuses; he kept a rum shop or drinking saloon, made money, and wasted his spiritual good in all manner of ways, useless, irreligious. His wife went to these prayer meetings. She became a truly converted woman. He forbade her going to the prayer meetings, but she would go. She kept on going though he got angry and said she must not. Finally he told her she must leave him or quit going to the prayer meetings. He told her something like

this, 'Now if you will go up into the chamber and pray with me, you may pray as much as you please, but you must not go to the prayer meetings.' She said she did not know how to pray for him or with him, for she had only just begun to pray for herself. So they went into the chamber and he was very much surprised to hear her pray. That day every thing went wrong. Next morning they went into the chamber to pray. 'I thought I would let her pray it out, and by keeping her from the prayer meetings I should break the charm.' So they kneeled down together and she prayed such a prayer as took a deep hold of his heart; as they rose from their knees he kissed her and went away. His heart was softened, subdued, and he came humbly at the feet of Jesus, a converted man. We rejoice over scores such as he. He abandoned his liquor selling at once. He witnessed a good confession."

ONE WHO HID HIS LORD'S MONEY.

This was related by the convert himself, a lumberman from the mountains of Pennsylvania.

"All through the mountains of Pennsylvania the Lord has been pouring out his Spirit, and among these thoughtless wicked men, as they are in our country, he has brought many to repentance. For forty-nine years I lived the life of an impenitent man. It is not more than three months since I commenced a religious,

life. I went to a Methodist camp meeting in our neighbourhood. I did not go to it at the beginning. I thought I had so much to do that I would not go. I went toward the close of it. As soon as my pious wife saw me come upon the ground, she said, 'You must come into the praying circle.' I went with great reluctance. It pleased the Lord to awaken me at that meeting. But it closed, and I found no relief. I went on from day to day in great anxiety about my soul. I heard of another meeting, and I went more than a hundred miles to attend it. I sought but I did not find. I was made the subject of prayer. It came to the last day of the meeting, and I was afraid I should have to go away without any change in my heart. When near the time of closing the meeting, it was proposed to spend a little time in prayer in the tent for prayer. Some said it was unseasonable. Some said they had a little season that might thus be occupied, and I was invited to read a portion of Scripture and pray. It took me by surprise. I opened the Bible to the chapter about the talents. I read. I was tempted to hide my talent as did the slothful servant. I resolved I would not do it. And I kneeled down to pray. The Lord met me in that prayer. He led me to make a complete surrender. The burden was gone. The anxiety was taken away. I felt that my sins were forgiven. I find peace and joy in believing. I am always happy, and happy to be in such a meeting

as this especially. I feel it my privilege and duty to bear testimony for Christ. I love him much. I have had much to be forgiven. I have been greatly blessed since I first loved the Saviour. I intend to bear my cross and do my duty everywhere; at all times, and on all occasions."

THE PRAYER MEETING AT "HELL CORNER."

Few chapters in the history of the Holy Spirit's workings are more surprising than the one under this title, which a gentleman from New Hampshire related some weeks since in Fulton street. He said: "In the locality of which I speak there are about twenty families, isolated and cut off from all association with the surrounding neighbourhoods. They have no communication with any body beyond themselves.

"These families are distinguished for their profanity, wickedness, gambling, and almost every vice. They have no respect for religious institutions. They are shut out from all means of grace. They are a reckless, hardened set of people.

"On a late occasion, one of these men was in at a neighbour's house, and while there indulged in the most horrid oaths. The woman of the house said to him,

"If you don't stop swearing so, I am afraid the house will fall down over our heads.'

"Well, I should think,' said the man, 'that you are getting very pious, from what you say.'

“‘Well, I should think it time for some of us to be getting religious.’

“‘If you feel that way, suppose that we have a prayer meeting in your house,’ said the man.

“‘Yes, we will have a prayer meeting; we will have a prayer meeting,’ chimed in from many voices. And a prayer meeting was agreed upon, and the time was fixed. They got a man to lead the meeting—the only man living in the neighbourhood who had ever been a professor of religion. He was a notorious backslider, and of course answered their purposes all the better for that; for all this was meant as a burlesque upon prayer meetings.

“The time came for the meeting and all assembled. The backslider undertook to lead the meeting, but broke down in his prayer, and could not go on. They undertook to sing, and could not make out any thing at that. They determined not to give up so. They appointed another prayer meeting, on the next Sabbath at five o’clock P. M. They sent to a deacon of a Church living three miles off, saying, ‘that there was to be a prayer meeting at ‘Hell Corner,’ the common name by which the place was known, on next Sabbath afternoon, and wanted him to come down and conduct it.’ The good deacon did not dare to go. He thought it was either a hoax or a plan to mob him. He however spoke to a neighbour about it, and asked :

“ ‘Had I better go?’

“ ‘Go, by all means, and I will go with you,’ said the neighbour.

“So on the next Sabbath afternoon they went to the prayer meeting at ‘Hell Corner.’ All were assembled, preparing to give solemn and serious attention to the services.

“ ‘I had been there but a few minutes,’ said the deacon, ‘before I felt that the Spirit of the Lord was there.’ Four or five of these hardened, wretched men, were struck under conviction at this first meeting. Another meeting was held, and more were awakened. The prayer meetings are continued,” said the speaker, “and many of those who were brought under conviction have since been converted, and have become praying men and women. The work is going on with amazing power. At the last meeting heard from, more than one hundred were present. Here was a case where God’s Spirit went before any man’s efforts—showing us this one fact, that He can work without them. It also shows us the wide-spread range of the Holy Spirit’s influences.”

A PRAYER MEETING AT SEA.

A short time after the burning of the steam ship Austria, a very touching scene occurred in the lower room of the Consistory building.

The 91st Psalm had been read by the conductor

of the Meeting, and several prayers offered and remarks made, when a gentleman arose in the congregation and made some very affecting remarks on the subject of faith and trust in God under all circumstances, and by way of illustration made mention of a case on board the "Austria." He said that he had been informed by some one, for he had no personal knowledge of the parties, that a man whose wife and son were on board that unfortunate ship, had recently been making most diligent enquiry of the rescued passengers who had arrived in our city, trying to learn, if possible, something as to the fate of his wife and son. That on describing his wife to one of the passengers that he had sought out, that passenger thought from the husband's description that he had seen such a woman on board. The husband produced a daguerreotype of his wife, and the passenger immediately exclaimed, "That is the very woman, and God bless you, my dear sir, for it was she that organized a prayer meeting on board, in which my soul was blessed in my conversion." He then informed the afflicted husband that the last he saw of his wife and son, they were standing as far aft as they could get away from the flames, and when at last the devouring element rushed on them with such force as to be no longer endurable, he saw the wife and mother, with a calm serene countenance, embrace the son,

and then both committed themselves to a watery grave.

When the Meeting closed, a most affecting coincidence was observed.

A man who sat in the same seat with the one who addressed the Meeting, indeed the very next man to him, clasped his hands, and stood for a moment unable to utter a word, such was his emotion, but at last said, "That woman was my wife, and I, a stranger to every one here, have come in to seek consolation, and to ask an interest in your supplications, that God would assuage my grief, and bind up my broken heart!"

The scene was deeply affecting, and never to be forgotten by those who witnessed it.

Of the rescued passenger referred to it was said in the meeting, that when in the water, swimming, a pious friend inquired of him how he felt in view of death? He replied, "Perfectly happy; I can now rely on Jesus, and I am safe." And looking up on the ship, he added, "There stands the noble woman, with her son's hand in her's, to whom I owe all my hopes of salvation, for she it was that got up the prayer meetings."

What a consolation to the bereaved husband, to know that the last hours of his devoted, Christian wife, were spent in such acts of love to souls!

The character of the ship's company among whom

this zealous lady organized the Prayer Meeting, which was of such blessed influence to at least one soul, may be judged from the following extract from a statement made by Mr. Berry, a member of the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick, N. J., who was one of the rescued passengers :

“On board the *Austria* there were but few Christians, probably not more than twenty-five. There were some bold, wretched infidels. I saw the boldest and most heaven-defying of them all perish. The day before the disaster, tracts were distributed among the passengers, and were kindly received by most of them ; but this man’s depravity was not satisfied to receive one and destroy it before our faces, but he stealthily gathered as many as he could from the passengers, and feasted on his shame that he had destroyed them. He was as bold as a lion when there was no danger near ; but when God spoke the following day, he trembled at the alarm, and was scarcely able to move.

“I saw him go overboard. He threw out his arms as he lay upon his back on the waves, his eyes seemed as if they would start from their sockets, the writhings of agony were seen in his features ; and as he was sinking, the last I saw of him was, he clenched his hands, wringing them in agony, and he just leaving earth for —, oh ! for what ?”

A YOUNG MAN'S TESTIMONY.

About the middle of August, a young man summoned courage to add his voice to the many which had gone before him in grateful acknowledgment of the Lord's distinguishing goodness. He said :

"I wish to bear my testimony, and tell what the Lord has done for me. Fifteen years ago I came from a neighbouring village into this city. I had pious parents, who prayed constantly for me all these fifteen years. Yet in all that time I do not know that I had a single serious impression. I don't remember that I ever had any anxiety on the subject of religion till last January, when I heard a sermon upon this passage, 'Cut it down ; why cumbereth it the ground.' I heard it as every word of it addressed to me. I did not suppose that there was another one in the house that it applied to. I was the unfruitful fig tree. I was plunged into the deepest anxiety, and knew not what to do. I had a wife, and I did not know how she would regard my state of feeling. At length I found that she had been awakened by the same sermon. We went to our pastor and told him all our hearts, and in a little while were permitted to hope for pardon and peace through our Lord Jesus Christ. I have been often at these Meetings, and have wished often to speak, but never could get courage to do so. There may be some young man who hears me, whom

I may persuade to come to Jesus—some one for whom a father and mother are praying or have prayed in times past. I have exchanged the theatre for the church, and the drinking saloon for the prayer meeting. I earnestly entreat you to do the same.”

FIDELITY OF A CONVERTED ROMANIST.

A little more than a year ago, a young Irishman came with his wife from Halifax, one of the British provinces, to establish himself in this city. While without employment he was attracted by a newspaper notice to the Noon Meeting in Fulton street, and out of curiosity went there. He became interested, and began to attend regularly. He was observed by some of the brethren, who invited him to attend the other services held in the North Dutch Church. He did so, and at last passed from darkness to light, renouncing the errors of his ancestral faith, and embracing the Lord Jesus Christ as his only and complete Saviour.

As he was without employment, his means gradually wasted away. In his destitution, being a stranger here, he naturally applied to his relatives, not for money, but for such recommendations as would secure him a situation, having every reason to believe that a word from them would answer the purpose. The result is shown by the annexed letter from a man whom the convert's own father had edu-

cated and established in a lucrative business—a man of station, influence and wealth, having extensive mercantile relations in this city.

“*Sir*,—Your letters have been received, and in reply, I have to inform you, that you have by your own course of conduct precluded the possibility of our rendering you that assistance which we may naturally feel disposed to. Doubtless you now see, that your present condition is only one of the natural and merited consequences of your disgraceful and unpardonable apostacy from the Church of Christ. Could my brother or myself, with any degree of propriety or consistency, recognise you again, it could only be on your atonement, and, if by any possibility, obtaining the pardon and reconciliation of the Church, made manifest to us by the production of a certificate, to that effect, from the Bishop.

“I am, Sir,

“Your obedient servant.”

Shortly after this, he providentially learned the existence of a sister whom he had not seen for many years, and who was living in very comfortable circumstances in a southern city. On making himself known to her by letter, he was at once cordially recognized, and invited to repair to the place of her residence, where suitable provision would be made

for him. He received several letters from the same source, all of the same encouraging tenor, before he was ready to go. But these were written in ignorance of his change of faith. He however thought it right, before accepting the offers made to him, to inform his relative of his change of faith. As soon as he did so, all communication was broken off, and he was left to struggle alone in his poverty.

He did not complain, nor was his faith shaken. So far from returning back to the superstitious formalism from which God's grace had rescued him, he deliberately connected himself with a Protestant Church, and thus sealed his renunciation of Romanism. Having obtained a temporary employment sufficient barely to maintain himself, he waits patiently till God shall open some way by which he may earn a competent support, and thus become able to recall his wife, who, by the pressure of want, was compelled to accept a situation which removed her to a distance from him.

A YOUNG CONVERT'S ARDOUR.

Last month a new voice was heard in the Noon Meeting. It was that of a young man recently made to see the preciousness of the Saviour. He said,

"One week ago I was an enemy to Jesus Christ. Now I stand here to tell you how much I love him. A change has taken place in my heart, which is an

astonishment to myself. All last winter and spring I never attended one single prayer meeting. I was not willing that any one should speak to me on the subject of religion—I would turn and would not hear. One day last winter, a lady came to my father's store, to invite me to go to the prayer meeting. She came in her carriage, and invited me to get in and go with her. I told her that I did not thank her for coming after me—that I was not to be persuaded or urged to go to the meetings. Now I am here, to tell you I did come to the prayer meeting; and I feel that my sins are pardoned. My iniquities are blotted out, and I am owned and blessed of God. No one thing impressed me that I know of. I am sure I can attribute it to nothing but the Holy Spirit. I have been more thoughtful than usual for two months past. My father and mother and sister have been praying for me. And now my dear, precious, praying mother goes up and down the house thanking God for having had mercy on me. There is not a room in the house that she has not made vocal with her praises and thanksgivings. The lady who invited me to go with her in her carriage to the prayer meeting, inquired of me if I would go with her now, if she would call for me in her carriage. I told her I could go on foot, and did not need a call in a carriage to induce me to go to the prayer meeting, for I would not stay away; and I find enough to do. I am determined to do

something for the Master I love. I will persuade my young friends to love Him too."

ANOTHER.

"One day a young man obtained the floor and said, "It is but two weeks since I found an interest in Christ. I am but two weeks old as a Christian. I am impressed with the deep conviction that I am not my own. I have been bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ. I have begun in earnest to do the duties of a Christian. I have conversed with and urged my best friend to the duties of a religious life, and I know him to be anxious on the subject of religion. I am desirous you should pray for him. I am anxious for his conversion. I hope we shall live a religious life together, shall together run up the shining way, and be associated together in the great work of leading sinners to Christ. I have also a brother for whom I request your prayers. He is the only one now left, who is without a Christian hope, in our family. If he were brought into the fold of the Good Shepherd, then we all should be the sheep of his pasture. Pray for him.

"And if there be a young man here, having no interest in the Saviour, let me say, the pleasures of this world were as much to me as to any young man. I had as much to enjoy in them, and as much to enjoy with my associates as you. And yet I must say, that

in the past two weeks I have enjoyed more real, solid, substantial happiness, than in all my life before. What I before enjoyed I count as nothing. I count it less than nothing, in comparison with what I now enjoy. Surrounded as I was with every thing that could make life a pleasure, I had as much to give up as any one. And long, long was the struggle maintained in my own heart between giving up the pleasures of sin for a season, and submitting myself at once and forever to the service of God. But at length the contest was ended, and I yielded to the unspeakable claims which Christ has upon me. I exhort my young friends to come to Christ. His yoke is easy. His burden is light. I had tried every thing but religion; I feared religion would strip me of all happiness, that it must be *endured* for the sake of gaining heaven. How mistaken I was. It is heaven below to be a real Christian, and it will be always heaven, and by and by heaven completed."

AN ACTOR'S RESCUE.

On a subsequent day in the same month, a young man arose, and said that he had a few words to say in relation to his own experience.

"I trust that during this past summer I have been led to embrace Jesus Christ as he is offered in the Gospel. I had attended these Meetings nearly every day for two months, and I bless God that he has made

these Meetings the means of my salvation. My career has been a sad one, wretched beyond all description. Ten years ago I was under the conviction of sin. I was then preparing for college. I grieved away the Holy Spirit. I took to the intoxicating cup, and it nearly proved my ruin. Twice did I suffer terribly from that dreadful disease, delirium tremens. For two years my friends did not know whether I was dead or alive. During that time I was an actor on the stage, with all its vice and allurements dragging me down to ruin, deeper and deeper down, continually sinking—down, down, by the power of the ‘evil one.’ But God’s grace has been mercifully shown me, and a mother’s prayers have been heard, put up in my behalf. These, coupled with the influence of these Prayer Meetings, have been the means of bringing me, a poor repenting sinner, to the Saviour. How thankful I am that he can save to the uttermost, and that he has said, ‘Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.’”

“WISHES TO KNOW HOW TO BELIEVE.”

A Roman Catholic young lady, during the last month, was invited to attend the Noon Prayer Meeting. She did so to please the person who invited her, but the next day went again of her own accord. A few days afterwards, without suggestion from any one, she sent the following request:

“A lady—Roman Catholic—who has attended a few of these Meetings, who came at first out of curiosity, who heard here such things as she has never heard before, would be very thankful if the Meetings this week would pray for her. She does not think she is a Christian. She knows she is a sinner. She slept not a moment last night for anxiety. She wishes to be led to faith in Christ. She wishes to know how to believe.”

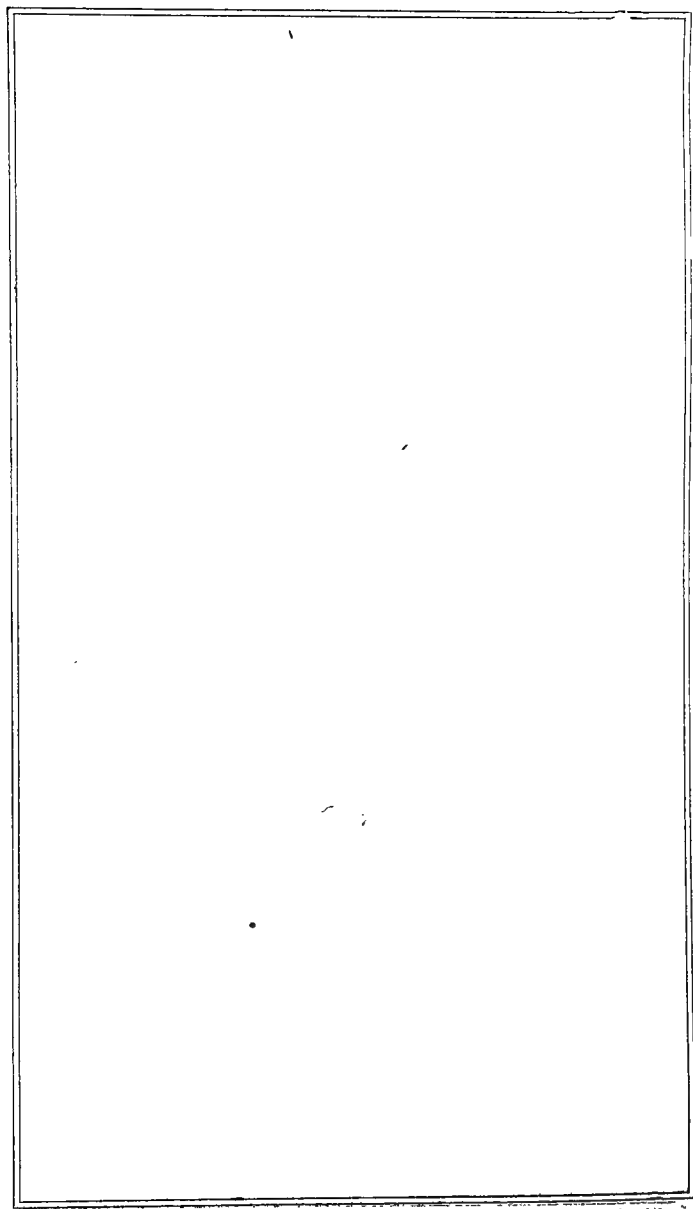
Her case was tenderly remembered, and it pleased God to lead her in the right way, and to teach her by his Spirit how to believe. She has renounced all works, forms, penances, and puts her trust in Christ—in Christ alone. In him she is now rejoicing as an all-sufficient Saviour.

“ASHAMED TO BE SEEN GOING TO THE NOON MEETINGS.”

Last winter, a young man of infidel principles and loose habits, was invited by one of the firm for whom he was a clerk to attend the Noon Meeting. Not having been in a church for seven years, he scornfully rejected the invitation, but was afterwards induced to go, out of respect to the relations and character of the gentleman who invited him. While there, his attention was arrested and his heart touched, although he carefully concealed his feelings from all others. For some time he continued to attend the Meeting, but took care to wait until his employer had gone, so as

not to be observed. And then, instead of going on the direct way to the Consistory building, he would cautiously move around by a circuitous route through by-streets to the place, because, as he afterwards acknowledged, he was ashamed to be seen going to a prayer meeting. But at length this would no longer do. His state of mind became such that it could not be concealed. He avowed his concern for his soul, sought counsel from Christian friends, and went to the prayer meeting, not skulkingly as at first, but openly and boldly as one not ashamed of Christ or his cross.

The result is shown by an extract from one of his letters written some weeks afterwards. "On Sabbath next I shall unite with the Church. The cross is easy to bear, and the burden light. Were there no hope of heaven, the happiness of this life in Christ's service would pay a thousand times for all the sacrifices it requires."



CHAPTER XII.

Other Incidents.

UNDER this head are arranged some interesting narratives brought out in the course of the Meetings, and not properly referable to any of the foregoing chapters.

One of these is a signal example of fidelity to principle in the case of the captain of a western steam boat. A reference having been made to him one morning in Fulton street, a correspondent of the New York Observer sent to that journal the following full statement.

THE STEAM BOAT CAPTAIN.

"Captain — was, comparatively, born and reared on the Ohio river, among the keel boatmen, as reckless and immoral a set of men as inhabited our country, but who are now extinct. When steam power came into use, Captain — being an active and enterprising man, he soon became one of the

most efficient and responsible commanders of boats in the West; and if worldly gain had been his object, probably the best situation on the river would have been awarded him had he desired it. In the winter of 1840 he commanded the steamer Boston, which was lost in the ice on the Mississippi. About this time a religious interest existed in the Third Presbyterian Church, of this city, Rev. Dr. Riddle's.

"Captain ——'s wife attended the prayer meetings, and experienced a change of heart; in the mean time the writer sent her 'Advice to a Young Christian,' by Rev. J. B. Waterbury. Shortly after, he returned home and was displeased to find his wife in this state of mind, and opening the book he exclaimed with an oath, 'Who sent this book to you?' When she stated who it was, in a highly excited manner he said, 'What business has Mr. —— to send such a book to my wife.' His wife being a person of a cool and kindly temperament, calmly invited him to attend the prayer meeting with her; on the first evening he sunk under the convictions of the truth, which being deep, he became like a little child, modest and unassuming; he did not obtrude on his brethren to tell his troubles and experience, or lean on an arm of flesh. Some friends feeling that he was under the influence of the Spirit, and believing he had experienced a change of heart, visited him, presenting to his mind the promise and requi-

sitions of the Gospel, and advising him to place all his trust in God. His great trouble was, concerning the running of his boat on the Sabbath, which boatmen deemed unavoidable. He was fearful of embracing the privileges of the Church, because he might be tempted to do violence to his conscience and dishonour the cause of Christ. He waited eight or ten months before he united with the Church, all the time strictly fulfilling the duties of a Christian as regards the Sabbath. Now began the trial of his faith, his sorrows and disappointments. He set an example of Sabbath keeping for the Christian world, amid the jeers and scoffs of steam boat men, who, when passing his boat tied up, made such expressions as the 'Godly keeping craft,' 'Sanctified line,' &c. But this soon ceased; he lived it down, and these men began to look on him with reverence and respect, and spoke of him in such terms as these: 'Captain ——'s religion is genuine, and he is a true Christian.' But duty became a daily martyrdom; passengers left his boat when he tied up, and professors of religion among them. Merchants sent their freight by other boats for fear of a loss of one or two days. Once a company of clergymen, after commending his enterprise and bidding God speed, said their necessities compelled them to go on, left his boat on Saturday night, took another, ran aground, and arrived at the place of destination one day after Capt. —— did.

Thus he persevered, his property melting before him, with a growing family, the world opposed to him, and the Christian Church an indifferent spectator of his labours, we might almost say, an obstacle; for many professing Christians were steam boat owners.

“When his boat was laid up on the Sabbath, and he would retire to his state room for reading and prayer, his ears were often assailed by the noise, profanity, and ribaldry of his crew. He could have no calm enjoyment of the Sabbath. He gave up passenger boats, and built freight boats. His peculiar circumstances became very trying. I visited him, to console him. His wife, who was his strength and stay in all his trials, remarked ‘that she would rather live on bread and water, than that he should betray his Master.’ I ventured to advise him in this way:

“‘You have beaten the track for the Christian Church, proved your sincerity, have sacrificed property, comfort, and religious privileges, and in my opinion duty does not require you, to go further; why not quit the river, and find some business on land?’ He heeded not the advice, but continued on, and has now attained a competence—by setting up a proper rule for his business, and making the community come up to that rule, as every business man should do.”

But it was eighteen years before the tide began to

turn, and all that time he persevered in a sort of martyrdom, so far as property was concerned.

THE DANGER OF DELAY.

This was once strikingly set forth by a sailor, a Scotchman by birth, who said :

“Will you take a sailor’s advice, a stranger sailor, you who are now deciding that at some future time you will be a Christian; will you take a sailor’s advice and not delay your choice another hour, but come now and be on the Lord’s side. You cannot possibly magnify the danger of delay. You cannot believe it to be half as great as it is.

“I remember when in Panama, one of my brother sailors was taken very sick. I had previously, on many occasions, urged him to take Jesus as his guide, counsellor and friend. But his answer had ever been, ‘Time enough yet.’ That fearful putting off; that delivering himself up to the power of Satan, who was constantly whispering in his ear, ‘Time enough yet,’ reached its fearful crisis at last. As he lay sick upon his mattress, his writhings and contortions denoted the fever and pain that were within. But the fever of his soul was causing much more anguish than all his bodily ailments.

“I said to him, ‘you need a Saviour now.’ ‘Oh,’ he said, ‘I have put off seeking Jesus too long.’ I earnestly begged him to look at the cross of Christ,

and there learn what Jesus had done and suffered, that a poor sinner like him might not perish, but have everlasting life. But he replied, with choking sobs, 'Too late,—too late. Oh!' he cried, 'no rest for me. I am going to some place I know not where. Oh! I know not where!' His head fell back upon the pillow. I cried, 'Ned, are you dying?' But all I heard was—through the gurgling in his throat—'no rest,'—and my dying shipmate was gone."

Another touching incident he related as intimately connected with his own conversion, bearing upon the danger of delay. It was at his own home. He had a very pious God-fearing mother, who had never neglected any opportunity which offered, to impress upon his young mind the urgent need of seeking a Saviour in his youthful days, but he had constantly neglected to pay more than a passing attention to his mother's admonitions, until one Sabbath morning his mother invited a young girl, a neighbour's daughter, to accompany them to the house of prayer. She replied in a light and trifling manner, "Oh! no, I cannot go until next Sunday. I shall have a new bonnet then; my old one is too shabby." "Alas! that next Sabbath never came for her. On Monday she was taken quite sick. On Wednesday she died. My mother told me, with streaming eyes, as she came home from watching at her bedside, 'Emma is gone; and gone, I fear,

without conversion.' This was so sudden, so unexpected, that it woke within my heart the cry, 'What must I do to be saved?' And blessed be God, that cry was not made in vain. Jesus had mercy on my soul. He has been to me ever since that time the Rock of Salvation. Oh! come to him, all you who need the saving grace of a dying risen Saviour? Will you take a sailor's counsel? Will you come? God is calling you. Come now."

THE SAME SUBJECT, BY ANOTHER SAILOR. •

At a prayer meeting in Philadelphia, a stranger arose and begged the privilege to speak, announcing himself as a captain of a vessel now in port, and a professor of the religion of Christ. "I wish," said he, "to warn the impenitent here that delays are dangerous. It is not safe to put off until to-morrow what ought to be done this day. It was my lot, when sailing, to fall in with that ill-fated steamer, the Central America. The night was closing in, the sea rolling high, but I hailed the crippled steamer, and asked if they needed help.

" 'I am in a sinking condition,' cried Captain Hern-
don.

" 'Had you not better send your passengers on board now?' I replied.

" 'Will you not lie by me until morning?' responded Capt. H.

“ ‘I will try,’ replied I; ‘but you had better send your passengers on board.’

“ ‘Lay by me till morning,’ again said Capt. Herndon.

“I made an effort to lie by him; but at night, with such a sea rolling, no vessel could control its position, and I never saw the steamer more. In one hour and a half after the captain said, ‘Lay by me till morning,’ the vessel, with its living freight, went down, and he himself, with a great majority of his passengers and crew, were coffined in the deep. So much for procrastination. But for this delay, the entire crew and passengers of the Central America might have been saved. Sinners! when urged to immediate repentance, do not say to beseeching friends, to offered mercy, to a striving Spirit, ‘Not now, lay by me a little longer, till I have a convenient time.’ This night you may sink in the waves of perdition.”

LITTLE CHILDREN SAYING GRACE.

“It had been noticed,” said a speaker, “that something was the matter with four little children from the same family, in one of our public schools. One of the teachers inquired what the matter was, and she ascertained that these lovely little children were suffering for lack of food; that all they had to eat for days was a crust of bread and water. They had come to school

with no better. They were German children, and their parents were unable to obtain food for them.

"This teacher, who had ascertained the facts, went to the head teacher and communicated them to him. He sent home immediately, and had a good dinner prepared for them. He then took them to his own house. On arriving there the youngest refused to go in. He said he did not know what kind of a house it was, and he did not like to go into a house without his mother knowing and approving of it. Finally, after very much persuasion they got them all into the house. They took them to the parlour: there was an abundant meal set out. They seated them at the table; they urged them to eat: they not could not persuade them to touch a mouthful. Finally it was resolved to leave these little children alone; perhaps they would eat then. The lady of the house paused at the door, and looking through the crack, what was her surprise to see the oldest little boy put up his two little hands together, and say grace—asking for God's blessing, and thanking him for his mercies. May we not all learn a lesson," said the speaker, "from these little children, who, though they were starving, refused to eat till they had first acknowledged God's hand in the food provided."

THE DYING SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHOLAR.

This narrative was given in one of the meetings.

There was a poor family which had an intemperate father who often used to abuse his wife and children. One of the children attended the Sabbath school and became pious. Afterwards she was taken sick. The physician told the father that his little girl would die. No ! he did not believe it. Yes, she will ; she must die in a few hours. The father flew to the bed-side, " would not part with her " he said.

" Yes, father, you must part with me, I am going to Jesus ; promise me two things, one is that you wont abuse mother any more nor drink more whiskey."

He promised in a solemn steady manner. The little girl's face lighted up with joy.

" The other thing is, promise me that you will *pray*," said the child.

" I cannot pray, don't know how," said the poor man.

" Father, kneel down, please. There, take the words after me, I will pray ; I learned how to pray in Sunday school, and God has taught me how to pray too ; my heart prays, you must let your heart pray, now say the words."

And she began in her simple language to pray to the Saviour of sinners. After a little he began to repeat after her ; as he went on his heart was interested and he broke out into an earnest prayer for himself ; bewailed his sins, confessed and promised to forsake them, entered into covenant with God ; light broke

out upon him in his darkness, how long he prayed he did not know; he seemed to have forgotten his child in his prayer. When he came to himself, he raised his head from the bed on which he had rested it; there lay the little speaker, a lovely smile was upon the face, her little hand was in that of the father, but she had gone to be among the angels.

A LIVING SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHOLAR.

On another occasion, the following was related:

Away in the West lived a Roman Catholic family, in which there was a little girl seven years old. She was induced to go to a Protestant Sunday school. The father became very anxious about his soul. His distress increased daily, and one night, at the midnight hour, he arose from his bed in agony. He begged his wife to pray for him, as he said he did not know how to pray himself. She told him she "could not pray—no better than he could."

"What shall I do, then?"

"Perhaps," said she, "our little Mary can pray."

So the father went up to the chamber where she was fast asleep, and took her up from her bed in his arms, and bore her down stairs, and putting her gently down, he said to her with great earnestness, "Mary, can you pray?"

"Oh yes, father, I can pray."

"Will you kneel down and pray for your poor father?"

"Yes, I will pray for you."

So she kneeled, put up her little hands, and said, "Our Father, who art in heaven"—going through with the Lord's Prayer. Then she prayed for her father in her own language, asking God to love him and have mercy on him, and to pardon all his sins for Jesus Christ's sake.

When she had finished her prayer, her father said to her, "Mary, can you read in your Bible?"

"Oh yes, father, I can read. Shall I read to you in my Bible?"

"Yes, read to me."

She began at the third chapter of the Gospel according to John. She read along till she came to that verse—

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"Oh, Mary," said he, "is that there?"

"Yes, father, it is here. Jesus Christ said so."

"Well, that is just what I need—what your poor father needs."

"Yes, father, and hear the rest of it:"

"For God so loved the world that he gave his

only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life."

"Oh, that is for me—for just such as me: 'whosoever believeth in him'—I *can* believe in him—I *do* believe in him."

And from that hour that father went on his way rejoicing in Christ Jesus with great joy.

ROMAN CATHOLICS.

Several instances of the conversion of persons of this class have been mentioned, and these are only specimens of a considerable number. Two features have marked nearly every case which has come under the writer's eye.

One is the rapidity with which the saving change has been wrought. Almost in a moment the whole crust of formal religion has melted away under the subduing grace of the Holy Spirit convincing the soul of sin. For example, the pastor of a town in Massachusetts, speaking in the Fulton street Meeting of the work of grace in his own place, said that some very remarkable conversions had taken place among men of wealth, but none more remarkable than that of a Roman Catholic servant girl, who was awakened under the first Protestant sermon she ever heard, and in the first Protestant meeting she ever attended, and brought almost at once to Christ. He had received

her into his own Church, and she was now walking in humble obedience to the truth.

The other feature is, that in nearly every case there have been opposition and trials to be endured from friends or employers who continued in the old faith. To these converts it is given not only to believe on Christ but also to suffer for his name. Take, for example, one of the most recent instances—that of a young man whose heart was touched by the Spirit of God as he attended the Noon Meeting. He was employed by the day as a labourer by a contractor for laying pavements. After his change, he was seen one Lord's day going to an Episcopal Church. The next Monday morning the following dialogue occurred. He was asked by his employer,

“Did you go to the Protestant Church yesterday?”

“I did, sir.”

“And leave your own Church?”

“I did.”

“We want your services no longer.”

“Have I been unfaithful in my work?”

“No.”

“Have you any other fault to find with me?”

“None.”

“Must I go?”

“Yes, we do not want you any longer.”

It speaks well for the genuineness of the spiritual change which these converts profess to have under-

gone, that although dismissed from employment, banished from friends, treated as outcasts, they still hold on their way and appear willing, like the Apostle, to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

LINGERING AT THE DOOR.

The following incident is the counterpart of what has very frequently occurred at the Consistory building. Persons impressed by the regular exercises of the hour, after its expiration have still lingered near the entrance in hope of hearing further about the things of Salvation. Not often are they disappointed.

A writer, reporting a union meeting in an eastern town, said that while the meeting was in progress the bell was tolling. Toward the close of the meeting, a pastor arose and said that a few weeks ago, as he was passing from the prayer meeting, he noticed a modest, retiring young lady standing beside the door, lingering, evidently hoping that he would pause and speak to her. "I did speak to her," said he, "and found her anxious about her soul. I led her mind to Christ, and directed her as well as I was able, and in a short time she hoped that she had found the Saviour precious to her soul. That bell is tolling for her funeral, and in a few moments I am going to attend it. A few days ago I was sent to attend her sick bed. I conversed with her, and found her anxious and

agonizing. She was filled with doubts and fears lest she had not experienced the great change—the change of heart, but had deceived herself. Her mind was beclouded and darkened. I counselled her and prayed with her. I visited her from day to day. In a short time the darkness cleared away—the doubts vanished—her confidence that she had been forgiven and accepted returned, and all was sunshine and peace down to her dying hour. Oh ! how important was that single step of pausing at the door.”

OUGHT WE NOT TO HAVE FAMILY WORSHIP ?

At one of the Globe Hotel Meetings, a gentleman, after speaking of the blessed effects of a union daily prayer meeting established in Geneva, N. Y., related the following incident as having recently occurred.

A young man became convinced of sin, and was in great distress of mind. He had a very wicked and ungodly father. One night he said to his father, “Father, ought we not to have family worship?” The father looked at him in astonishment, as if in doubt whether his son could be in his right mind, but said nothing. The father, however, could not get the matter of family worship out of his mind, with all the efforts he could make. An arrow of conviction had been sent to his heart. The Holy Spirit was striving with him.

He at last resolved to establish family worship,

though he had no Christian hope. He began in fear and trembling and much embarrassment—but he began. In five days from that beginning, that father, that son, and two daughters were rejoicing in the hope and peace of believers in Jesus.

“IN A HURRY TO BE A CHRISTIAN.”

Careless readers of the narratives which have been given, may conclude that the missionary work in the Consistory building is always prosperous; that conviction is always followed by conversion. Alas! it is not so there any more than elsewhere. The following report of a case was published a number of weeks since. It respects a man who was deeply agitated respecting his soul, and thought that he had good reason to be.

“He had been a man of such a course of life that he had much to repent of. He had been a great transgressor—profane—idle—dissolute—intemperate—a hater of religion and all its duties and requirements—a disbeliever in much that is called religion. He had lived a hardened, ungodly life, till he chanced to stray into one of the Fulton street Meetings.

“He came up to the upper lecture room in great trepidation of mind. He wanted to find some place where there was a temperance pledge. He wished to sign it. He wanted to begin, at the beginning—and the first thing was to quit the abomination of

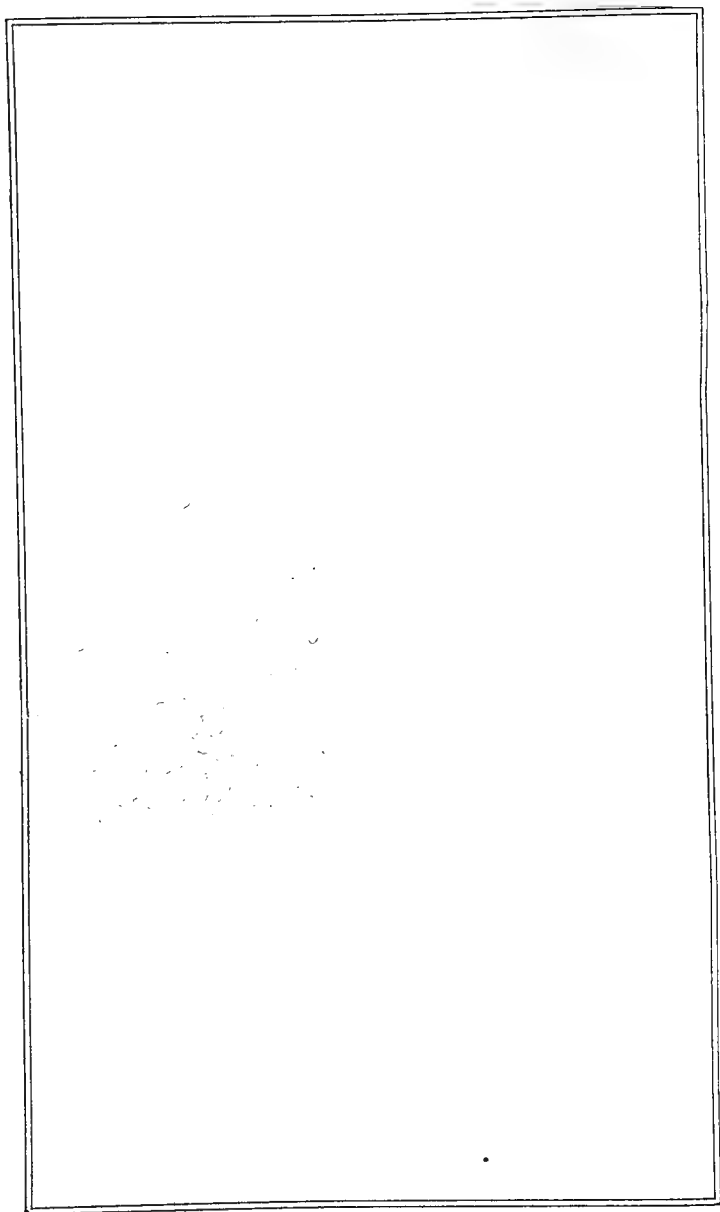
strong drink. This was the beginning of 'Let the wicked forsake his way,' and then he hoped he should be able to forsake every thing else that was wicked. He appeared to be in great haste. He said he was 'in a hurry to be a Christian.' This surely was according to the Scriptures, and yet he seemed to be wholly taught of the Holy Spirit.

"We saw him a few days after this. He had been faithful in coming to all the meetings. He had been faithful to his pledge of total abstinence. He was very jealous of himself. His great fear was, that some old 'evil companion' would get power over him—would get him to drink just one drop; then all would be gone, soul, body,—all would go to hell together. He said his continual prayer was, 'Lord! hold thou me up and I shall be safe. I cry to God continually, for I feel that God must help me or I shall fall. No man can realize the power of this appetite, who has not felt it. I must be a Christian to be safe.'"

It would be pleasant to be able to relate that one so humble, so enlightened, so conscious of his dependance, had persevered and been saved. But it is not in our power. It is not known that he has found the Saviour. It is known that once at least, after the occurrence of what is recorded in the foregoing extract, he fell into his ruinous sin. There is reason to fear that he illustrated his own declaration, "I

must be a Christian in order to be safe." Not having the safeguard of renewing grace, he fell, fell, perhaps, to rise no more.

Yet even here there is no reason to despair. Many men have fallen repeatedly, and yet have been finally raised by God's grace so as to stand even to the end. Indeed, one of the most important lessons taught by the recent displays of Divine power and mercy, is that no case is to be given up as hopeless. We cannot read the counsels of Him who "giveth not account of any of his matters;" we cannot possibly know when any man's day of grace is past; and therefore to us, "while there is life, there is hope." The prayers and efforts of Christians for any unconverted person should cease only with the cessation of his vital breath.





Thomas De Witt

1811-1881

CHAPTER XIII.

The First Anniversary.

ON the approach of the 23rd September, 1858, the day which would mark a twelve-month since the first Noon Meeting was established, it was deemed proper to hold a formal meeting for thankful praise and acknowledgment of the mercies God had bestowed upon his people. Such Meeting was duly held—the North Dutch Church being opened for the purpose. When the hour arrived the building was thronged to excess. The galleries, aisles, organ-loft, indeed every spot where there was any standing room, was fully occupied by a congregation such as is rarely seen even in this city. Nearly every evangelical Church in New York was represented by some of its members, while not a few Christians from abroad, including some from a considerable distance, were present.

We are indebted to the *Christian Intelligencer* for a very full and faithful report of the exercises, which we copy at length.

The hour of twelve having arrived, the exercises were commenced by the venerable Dr. De Witt, the Senior Pastor of the Collegiate Church, who presided on the occasion. He said :

When the associations connected with this Meeting are remembered, made up as it is of different religious denominations ; when the special providences that it recalls are taken into account ; together with the object that is set before us in the future, I trust every heart here is imbued with the spirit of prayer. Let us begin our exercises with invoking the Divine direction and blessing in these services. The introductory prayer will be offered by the Rev. Dr. Henry Scudder, a returned Missionary from India.

OPENING PRAYER BY REV. MR. SCUDDER.

The Rev. Henry M. Scudder, M. D., one of the missionaries of the Ref. Prot. Dutch Church at Arcot, India, offered up the following prayer :

O Lord Jesus Christ, thou art our King, our Prophet, our Priest, and our God. To thee we come for light, for pardon, for purity, and for wisdom. Thy righteousness is the only refuge of our souls, and we pray thee to be present with us at this hour of prayer, when we have come to meet thee, and to ask for thy intercession, who art seated at the right hand of our Father in Heaven. We pray thee to offer our petitions, which we bring before thee, and to hear the

voice of our supplications—especially to breathe upon us, that we may receive the Holy Spirit of promise, so that we may know how to pray, and what to pray for. Lift upon us, we pray thee, the light of thy countenance. We bless thee for all that thou hast done for us. We thank thee for the institution of this Meeting; we bless thee for all the gracious results which thou hast connected with it, and we pray thee now to pour out upon every one of us the Spirit of grace and of supplication. And in the times that are to come, we beseech thee that we may experience more of the convincing, the converting, the quickening and the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, and to thy name shall we render the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The congregation then joined in singing the first two verses of the 137th Psalm, third part, commencing:

“I love thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of thine abode;
The Church our blest Redeemer saved
With his own precious blood.

“I love thy Church, O God!
Her walls before thee stand,
Dear as the apple of thine eye,
And graven on thy hand.”

Rev. Dr. Leland, of Charleston, read the sixty-

second chapter of Isaiah, which was very appropriate to the occasion.

REMARKS BY DR. DE WITT.

The President spoke as follows :

It may be proper for me to make a very few remarks in reference to the design and appointment of this Meeting, and of these services. You all understand that on the 23d of September, last year, the first Noon-day Meeting took place in the adjoining building. Only a few Christian brethren assembled at first, but the numbers increased, and there was soon an evidence that God had mercy on his Church, and that there was an awakening and a revival among Christians. And so the numbers gradually increased, and the right spirit of united prayer prevailed before the throne of grace. The establishment of this Meeting was the means of spreading similar meetings throughout the land. We have been greeted with intelligence from the north and the south, the east and west, of the like union in prayer and in effort, and an outpouring of the Spirit. I always have felt, and have freely expressed it, that we should guard against any thing like glorifying human instrumentality, should keep very low and humble before the throne of grace. We should be very thankful, and cherish gratitude, but that thankfulness is always to be embedded in and nourished by humility. We come

to review here with thankfulness, in this assembly of Christians of different denominations, God's workings of grace in the midst of us and throughout the land. We are in a responsible position of great privilege, amidst large blessings, and we should be urged to continued effort. We need to guard and discipline our own spirit in dependence upon the Spirit Divine. We have heard gratefully that throughout the land, and in the fashionable watering places, Christians have gathered together; and as they have returned to the city, may we find that their graces are in lively exercise! All the Churches need now to put on their beautiful garments. It is in this union of spirit, and with this design, that we come to commemorate the year that is past, and to invoke the grace of the Holy Spirit to rest upon us, and upon all the Churches. The exercises will be, in their order, of a very similar character with what has been observed in the adjacent room, which may be viewed as the home of prayer. Short prayers and short addresses, from different brethren, will be interspersed. Of course the review of the past year and supplication for the opening year, will be the great theme; therefore, we have no specific individual requests on this day; to-morrow will open that subject again. Although there the limit of the hour is necessarily observed, yet on this particular occasion we shall not

strictly confine ourselves to the hour, but shall not largely go beyond it.

The Rev. Dr. Mc Carroll, of the Associate Reformed Church, Newburgh, led the devotions of the assembly, in a brief prayer, after which followed the

SPEECH OF DR. KREBS, (O. S. PRESBYTERIAN.)

The Rev. Dr. Krebs, of New York, spoke thus:

My brethren in Jesus Christ, when a few moments ago the venerable minister who is presiding in these exercises, requested me at this point to make a few remarks, I could not refrain from retorting upon him the question, "What about?" His reply was, "What you please." I suppose this is the spirit in which we are to go forward. Upon this solemn and affecting anniversary none of us, certainly not myself, shall pretend to instruct, but perhaps to say a few words from an overflowing heart—perhaps to touch some tender chord of recollection and of sanctified emotion that shall gather itself into the sentiment and the affection, to thank God and take courage. What hath God wrought?

It was about the close of the month of May, in the year 1830, that I first set my feet in this city, and the following day being the Sabbath, I came to worship God in this house. It was crowded almost as it is now, and being unable to find a seat upon the lower floor, with some little difficulty I obtained a place at

last in the furthest corner of yonder gallery, and heard Dr. De Witt preach the Gospel. A great change has taken place in this part of the city, and it has been supposed that, commerce encroaching upon it and driving out the inhabitants, it must necessarily be abandoned as a scene of religious service. What is in the future we know not, but here is an imposing spectacle, and only crowning that which we have seen during the last year, when the adjoining edifice was crowded from day to day with men retiring from the haunts of business, from all the cares and toils of commerce or mechanical engagements, who came together to pray. Here we have come together to thank God and take courage, and to exclaim again, What hath God wrought? In the midst of this great commercial city, it is to me a wonder to see such an anniversary as this. But I am reminded of the influence that has gone forth from this spot. This is but a specimen of what has been witnessed throughout the length and breadth of this land. The origin of this service is sufficiently ventilated. I only remind you, beloved friends, of the fact that God hath put it into the hearts of his people to honour him in the middle of the day. Oh, think of it. Christians leave the counter, the shop, the ship yard, the exchange, and all the marts of business, and come together to pray. These brethren of all denominations did not refuse to acknowledge each other as servants and ministers in

the Churches of Jesus Christ; but notwithstanding that acknowledgment and interchanges of communion and of pulpits, and in other ways, we were separated as we have not been within the last twelve months. Since then our hearts have fused, and our prejudices have been broken down. Oh, how the souls of brethren have been united, and how they have learned to love and respect each other in the midst of denominational differences, just as distinct as ever; but oh, how different from the jealousy and suspicion which, through the infirmity of our partially sanctified nature, has been the characteristic of the sectarian divisions of the Church of God. Thus, when we came together we made brief speeches and brief prayers. There was not need to say much, for the heart spoke. And this is right, and this practice has effected a vast improvement in the daily and weekly Prayer Meetings. There is such a thing as speaking too long and praying too long, and especially in such services. God by means of this has taught the brethren to utter from the heart briefly, pungently, and urgently, what was there, and to leave it indifferent to human criticisms, referring only to Him who seeth the heart. By this means how many weak souls have been encouraged, and how many have been brought into the Kingdom! And all this has been accomplished in the face of predictions. It was said that the religious awakening was mere enthusiasm, and it was made the

subject of ridicule by a ribald press. All the enemies of righteousness were gathered together against the Lord in this demonstration of his people, but God gave them strength and courage to persevere. Now, I simply remind you of these things. You knew them when I spoke of them, and before I spoke of them. But what is to be done? Let us look forward. Here is an argument, a demonstration; here is a lifting up of the standard to which the gathering of the people shall be. All the history of the past is a reason why every Christian, and every minister, and every closet, and every Church should resolve in the strength of God to go forward therein, invoking the Spirit of grace and supplication. It is God's work; it is marvellous in our eyes; to him be the praise.

REMARKS OF THE REV. DR. BANGS (METHODIST).

The Rev. Nathan Bangs, D.D., then rose and addressed the audience. He said:

The recent revival of religion among us, and throughout the country, I have considered as a very remarkable manifestation of the goodness of God. I have been in the ministry now for a little over fifty-seven years, and I have seen a great many powerful revivals during that time in various parts of this country and in Canada. Many sinners have been awakened and converted, and believers sanctified; but those revivals of religion were of a local charac-

ter ; they were confined to one or two denominations, and they were opposed, in fact, by a great many professors of religion, as fanaticism. But what is the character of the present revival ? It is not confined to time nor to place. It has been begun, it has been carried on, and, I trust, is still in progress. It has spread through all the different denominations of Protestant Christians—pretty much all, I believe ; some, perhaps, have not shared so largely of it as others. Still, what has been the effect of it ? Why, sir, we see the effect of it here to-day. It brings the different denominations together, and makes them for a moment forget their denominational peculiarities ; it tears down their sectarian prejudices, and makes them feel all as one. So I feel, and so, I trust, you feel also. Allow me here, if you please, to tell you an anecdote. Soon after the Christian Alliance was called together in England, the delegates having returned to this country, undertook to form an alliance here. They did form one, and appointed a President, a Vice President, and a Board of Directors. I had the pleasure and the honour of being one of the Board of Directors, made up of different denominations. One day, while we were assembled together, we made a proposal that we should interchange pulpits one with the other, and that we should all preach on brotherly love. That was to be the theme. At the next meeting that we held, I asked one of the brethren what

progress he had made in the plan suggested at the previous meeting. "Well," said he, "I thought of it, but I have done nothing." Another said, "I have thought of it, but I have done nothing;" and so it went around. "Well," said I, "I have not only thought of it, but I have done it—I preached upon the subject of brotherly love. I have been a man of war," said I, "all my days almost. I have fought the Calvinists, the Hopkinsians, and the Protestant Episcopalians, or rather I have defended myself and my denomination when they have been assailed by them, but," said I, "I have laid aside the polemic armour long since, and I felt it my duty to preach, brethren, upon brotherly love." Well, when I sat down, up jumped a Calvinistic brother, and said, "How glad I am to hear Brother Bangs speak in that language. I fought him, and he has fought me, but now I feel like giving him my hand." He held out his hand and I seized it, and we had a time of rejoicing there together. Well, that is just my feeling. I feel as though it was my duty to preach principally upon experimental and practical religion, and I am ready to give the right hand of fellowship to every man that will join me upon that theme. Now, the great question remains, Shall this revival continue? I think it may continue, and it ought to continue. It depends upon the fidelity of the people of God whether it shall or not. If the professors of religion could be induced

to go forward, press on, and fix their minds upon the mark, as Paul did, the revival of religion would continue to spread. He fixed a mark at which he aimed, and so must professors of religion. We must always fix our minds upon that mark, and aim at it. And what is that, short of holiness of heart, of life, and of conversation? And if we can all feel the quickening influences of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts, urging us forward to take up our cross and follow the Lord Jesus, he certainly will not forsake his Church, but will continue to pour out his Spirit more and more abundantly.

The venerable gentleman then led the devotions of the congregation in a brief address to the Throne of Grace.

One stanza of the 100th Hymn was sung, which reads thus:

“Rock of ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.
Let the water and the blood,
From thy side a healing flood,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath, and make me pure.”

SPEECH OF THE REV. DR. GILLETTE (BAPTIST).

Rev. Dr. Gillette rose and addressed the assemblage in the following words:

On receiving a note of invitation to be present

here, from the venerable Chairman of this meeting, my heart responded with gratitude, and I felt that it would be a privilege, and, indeed, my highest, my chosen privilege, to be a listener and a spiritual participant to-day of these services. Yet at his bidding I have consented to occupy two or three minutes of your time. The remarks of Dr. Krebs carried me back to my first visit to the city of New York, and to my second visit to the house of God in this city. My first visit was to an evening meeting in the old Baptist church in Gold street, and my second was to an evening meeting in this house, with the same venerable man preaching in this pulpit on the occasion, who preached a few years previous, on the occasion of Dr. Krebs's first visit to the city and to this church.

Running over the days and years, looking at the past, and recurring to peculiar instances in the progress of our Zion, generally, we must exclaim, as has been already uttered upon this floor, "What hath God wrought?" I recollect that at the time of the last war we had with Great Britain, there originated a company of venerable men, somewhere along the Hudson (I know they extended up towards its sources, into Rensselaer and Washington counties), who had been in the Revolution. They formed themselves into some organization, a battalion I think, known as the "Silver Grays," and pressed on to the northern frontiers of our country to aid their younger brethren in de-

fending themselves against the common foe. I remember in my boyhood, hearing some of the officers and men of the army, after they had retired upon peace terms with the mother country, allude to these veterans. They said that they had more of the spirit of war, the spirit of true independence, and a determination to conquer, yet a stronger desire for peace, than the younger soldiers possessed. No doubt they remembered the severer times and the greater wrongs and oppressions which they felt in their early days. Now as I sat here to-day, whilst our venerable father in Christ was speaking of himself and others who have grown gray in the service of Christ, I could not but draw something of a parallel between the history of the Church and that of our own country. There was a time when our Revolutionary ancestors were required, when all their valour, all their courage, all their prowess, and all their zeal was requisite — all of the spirit of war which they possessed. I do not pretend to say but that there was a time in the history of the Church when some sort of a spiritual warfare was needed. And when it was, these veterans of the Cross wielded their weapons, defended their positions, and contended for the faith in that good sense which we know this man of God (alluding to Dr. Bangs), meant by the words, "fought their brethren." But I thank God that the day in which I was called into the ministry, my call, if I ever received one, was to a work of

peace. It was a day of peace and a work of peace. I honour these venerable men of war; I see no scars upon them but those of honour. I do not believe their fight was an inglorious one, though they may look back upon it with some regret. But, brethren, peace reigns now; peace on earth so far, we trust, as the true spirit of Christianity prevails. And, in my humble judgment, that for which we have most to be thankful to-day in the history of these Meetings, is the fact that it has inaugurated permanently in this city a concert of Christian peace and Christian union. We have had allusion to the attempts at union, to the organizations for expunging various articles from our creeds, and the getting up of a creed upon which we could all unite; and we have found it was man's work, and it came to nought; but just so soon as this Meeting was inaugurated in the adjoining lecture room, and men forgot, as it were, to what denomination they belonged—to feel that they were Jesus Christ's, men stood up and spoke for him and for his cause, and called upon him to help them to fight the common enemy of immortal souls, their peace advanced over the hearts of men, because that spirit was from the God of peace and the God of love. And if we will but perpetuate this kind of instrumentality and encourage this disposition, we shall need to spend no time, brethren, in regulating our creeds; we shall

find that they will all amalgamate in the general creed, love to God and love to the souls of men.

“May this Meeting be continued,” is the prayer of all here to-day. And why not? As has been stated, its failure was predicted. I knew coalitions were formed to oppose and destroy it, and if they had succeeded we should have discovered their sources and resources; but having been defeated, they have hidden themselves as far as possible in the darkness of oblivion and have not dared to show their heads. It is of God, and oh, who can begin to calculate the influence which these Meetings are exerting? I have a letter addressed to this Meeting, but as the President stated that this was not the time for any communications of that sort, I concurred in his wisdom and put it in my pocket. It came from the far off prairies of Missouri, and is written by a venerable minister of Christ. It shall be handed to some of the gentlemen having the Meeting in charge, to be read hereafter at their convenience. The letter tells of the influence which this Meeting has had upon the community there, and beseeches you to remember them. But what is Missouri in the geography of the sway of the Spirit of God, that has gone forth from the origin of these Meetings? We must circle the globe, beloved brethren, if we would trace its ramifying influences; we must pass through the grave illumined by the Spirit of God, and see the glorified body of

our Lord Jesus Christ ; we must sit among the harpers, harping with their harps around the throne of God and of the Lamb ; we must go home to the fire-side of that man who, having neglected his closet and family altar, influenced by the spirit that gathered together the people that originated these Meetings and instituted others, has reërected that altar and relit the fire there, and has continued to call upon the God of families to bless his family ; we must go to the man that was dishonest who is now honest ; we must go to the numbers of young men and young women who have been gathered from the ways of impenitence and folly, and have consecrated themselves to Christ, who have lives of usefulness yet to live on the earth ; we must finally go to Him who knoweth all things, whose smile we trust is upon us, whose promise is to-day what it was one year ago. As that promise encouraged a few hearts then who believed it, to plead it, so may it encourage all our hearts, and the hearts of all who read and all who hear it, to believe and plead it just as it is : “ Ask and it shall be given you.”

REMARKS OF THE REV. DR. VAN PELT (DUTCH REFORMED).

The Rev. Dr. Van Pelt took the floor and spoke as follows :

As I have attended the Prayer Meetings in the adjoining room, and watched the progress of the good

spirit that permeated the assemblies, I cannot but say, that from the beginning and in its progress the Spirit of God has been signally manifested in its calmness and in its secret and powerful operation on the hearts of Christians, and those that prayed as poor sinners ever ought to pray, confessing their sins to God, and asking for the Holy Spirit to take of the things of Christ and to show them to them. And that is the way to commence in this great and good work. I cordially concur with you, sir, and with Brother Bangs, that experimental and practical piety should be preached, but then I would not forget what the Apostle Paul told Timothy. He told him to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine. We are to be on a platform, on a foundation such as the Bible presents us, and then to go and serve the Lord. Let me further say, that I regard this as a very uncommon meeting. We are here not to commemorate a temporal victory, nor to celebrate the martyrdom of saints, but to commemorate an event very extraordinary indeed in this city and in our land—a Prayer Meeting held in the middle of the day; when men are willing to leave their business to attend to the duties that God has enjoined upon us all with regard to the salvation of our souls. My brethren, our King (and we have but one), is the King of Glory, and to him be all the praise. He will reign till all his enemies are made his footstool.

Prayer was then offered by Rev. Dr. A. D. Smith, N. S. Presbyterian.

SPEECH OF DR. WILLIAM ADAMS (N. S. PRES.)

Rev. Dr. Adams was introduced by the President, and addressed the congregation in the following language:

We become used to things that are marvellous. Objects which once would have convulsed us with wonder, come at length to be regarded by us, through familiarity, as every-day occurrences. Two or three years ago, perhaps, there was some godly minister who had an imagination in his mind of a scene like this. Perhaps some one of these venerable pastors, coming from his pulpit to his closet in a time of gloom and depression, saying, "Who hath heard our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" indulged in some hope that the time might be when the people of God, forgetting all minor distinctions, would be drawn together in fervent prayer, and great multitudes would believe. And now we see it, and we have seen it for a twelve-month. There are here representatives of very many Churches. As my eyes pass over this congregation, I have been surprised to see the number of Churches that are represented, and the different communions, and not merely of this city, for I see here strangers from every part of our beloved country. This morn-

ing the east and the west, the north and the south, who have heard of this Meeting for prayer in this metropolis, who have enjoyed similar seasons at home, have been drawn by a convergency of sympathy to this hour of joyful devotion. Brethren, do not let us be indifferent to the magnitude of this event that is passing before us. What is it? God has made us prayerful, and he has disposed us to pray. What a great thing is that! Some times we look upon prayer as a means, and altogether as a means. Why should we not be gladdened to-day when we reflect upon it as a great thing in itself. I thought, when that glorious strain of sacred song was swelling in this temple of prayer, that we might, all of us, say, "God have mercy on the prayerless, for thou hast done every thing for the prayerful in disposing them to be prayerful." What a great result is this, that we may find devotional refreshment in such services as the Noon Prayer Meeting. Now, as for the objects and occasions of our gratitude. Allusion in several prayers hath been made to them. How many here to-day who have immortal hopes in their souls, who, a year ago were in darkness and were of those who had no hope and were without God, would go back a twelve-month? And if gold hath been poured into their coffers, would they exchange what they now possess for what they had a twelve-month ago? How many happy homes have

been blest! Oh! how many homes in this city and throughout our land, that are redolent with praise and fragrant with joy at the rising and the setting of the sun. What changes! If we could only gather into one congregation, upon this anniversary, those who have been hopefully converted to Christ through our land during the past year, what a choir, what a vast assemblage would they be! How spontaneous their joy, like the rolling of the waters! Let us think of them, and be grateful. How many have been added as available forces of the Christian Church! How many who will consecrate their talents and their property to the great work of Evangelism! How many at home! How many abroad!

The tidings of what God has been doing at this Meeting have been reported oftentimes. It was but yesterday a friend, a layman in this city, who is accustomed to find his annual recreation in the wilderness of the Adirondac, who is truly a Christian man, told me how, a year ago, when Saturday evening came, he instructed his guide to tarry upon the beach, the morrow being the Sabbath. The man listened to him for a while and said, "Well, you have been brought up in one way, and I have been brought up in another. I am going a hunting this afternoon." And so he went, though his friend remonstrated with him. This year he goes to the same place and finds the same guide, and the first thing the man tells him is,

"I have become a praying man;" and beneath that shanty in the wilderness, as they sat by the light of the evening fire, they read the word of God, and sang hymns and prayed together. I have just been in receipt of a letter from a distinguished person in Switzerland, asking for some definite information about this matter, this great revival of religion in America, and specifying a great many enquiries which he wished me to answer definitely upon this point. We must not forget that new life that has been diffused in the Old World. The *thing* is there, though they do not use the name that is familiar to us. Who can read what is now going on in the city of London? Who can read what those excellent men in the Established Church of England are doing now for the salvation of the working classes in that great metropolis? Who can read of those services in Westminster Abbey, in Exeter Hall, and in the open air, a mission under the sanction of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, and the noble corps of men associated with them? They do not call it a revival, but they have a revival of religion. Let the name pass for what it is, the *thing* is there. Who can doubt that there is in the Old World just now among Christians an increase of evangelical power? And to that point I think our hearts all converge at this particular moment. It is the increase of evangelical energy, and the most hopeful thing I have not yet

heard alluded to in this service, though this presence indicates where this power is lodged. To whom does it belong? The ministry? We are your servants for Christ's sake. I do not believe that the clergy are the Church. Brethren, you do not merely belong to the Church—you are the Church. You, Christian laymen, are, in concert with those who will endeavour to aid you, to lead, guide, and instruct, to do what the providence and the ordination of God hath appointed us to do. We will do this in concert, and we are to direct our thoughts unanimously to an increase of evangelical power. And where is that? It is in the heart, where God's Spirit dwells, and in the increase of that very love to which reference has been made. Let us read the Epistles of John over and over again, and see if we do not find there the vital energy and element of all Christian success. Let this power of the heart be increased, and we may stop very soon all special efforts, as it regards methods and agencies by which we have been endeavouring to diffuse the Gospel all around us. It will break forth like the light of the morning; men shall see and feel it, and be glad. What a joyful thing is this union of Christian laymen at this hour, in the midst of business. What a testimony is it for Christ? As these old churches stand down in these crowded streets day and night, sending their spires to heaven, they remind us—and it is a testimony to the world—that there is something

higher and better than the world. As I came down to this Meeting in a car, we passed a funeral, and loaded carts and crowds of men about their varied concerns. I thought of this blessed Christianity of ours, that we have in our hearts. We had better, my brethren, remember continually and testify to it, that the rails are laid, and the highway of the Lord is prepared; and through all these sable funerals, these gilded chariots, these loaded wains, and all this crowded commerce, this noise, bustle, confusion, and vanity of the world, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is going to rule through the whole of it, and we shall see how it is to be made subservient to the glory of our common Lord.

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT.

The President said:—Some observations which I made at the commencement of the Meeting will be remembered. I stated that there was a specific character to these exercises, though the order in which the services should be observed would be similar to the daily Meetings. The individual requests that are brought by brethren from day to day, will be read at the regular Meeting to-morrow. The general object of this Meeting is to offer thanks for the grace of the Spirit, and the application of it for the future, and, as is customary there, we have not laid the services open to the whole audience at the beginning. I understand

that the brethren at Philadelphia, who worship in Jayne's Hall, have a similar remembrance, and unite in the very same service with us. Now, if there be any one from that city, or any of the cities of the land, brethren from a distance, who will speak a word on this occasion, we shall be very happy to hear them.

SPEECH OF A MASSACHUSETTS MINISTER.

A minister from Massachusetts, who occupied a seat in the body of the church, responded to the invitation of the President, and said :

We have felt the influence of this revival and of this Prayer Meeting in Massachusetts most extensively ; not only in the cities, but in the country. In a little parish over which it is my privilege to preside, and where it is my privilege, and has been for several years, to preach the Gospel, God has poured the blessing of his grace upon that people. One of the results of this wonderful work of God has been, as has just been stated by the last speaker, the increase of evangelical power in the hearts of God's people. This work of grace goes on—I was going to say, almost without the aid of the ministry. There has been a wonderful power developed in our Churches. Let me give you a single example : About a year and a-half ago, a young married woman connected with my congregation was, as she trusts, brought into the

fold of Christ. She became deeply interested for her husband, but more especially so in the commencement of the spring. As God poured out the Spirit of his grace upon the people, she became more and more anxious for her husband. On one Sabbath afternoon, after coming home from the house of God (for he did not attend church, and was not in the habit of doing so), she said to her husband, "I want you to go to the prayer meeting to-night." She was deeply anxious that he should go that very evening. He said, "I will not go to night, but perhaps next Sunday night, if I live, I will go." But she became deeply anxious and importunate with him, so much so that he took his hat and left the house. Her mother, seeing her distress, said that she ought not to be so distressed about him, that he would go to the prayer meeting some other time. She replied, "I feel deeply impressed with the conviction that to-day must be the day in which his soul must be saved or lost." She followed him out, and with tears streaming down her cheek, she besought him to go to the house of God. "Well, to gratify you, I will go," said he. He went, and there the Spirit of the Lord met him. I had appointed a meeting for prayer and religious conference, and how was my heart rejoiced as I saw that man, who had seldom been at the house of God on the Sabbath day, coming in with his wife. As I passed around conversing with fifteen or twenty, I presently

came to him and said, "My dear friend, I am glad to see you here to-night. Do you feel interested in your soul?" He replied, "I have felt myself since last evening to be such a great sinner that I have scarcely known what I have been about all the day. I want to be a Christian. I want to get rid of this load of sin that lies upon my heart." Said I, "Are you not willing to confess your sins to God and confess Christ in this little room?" "I am willing to do any thing," was the reply. "Will you kneel down here while we endeavour to commend you to God, and pray that he will grant you pardon?" We all knelt down, and there I trust he gave his heart to the Saviour. Before we separated he said, "I will go home and set up the family altar to-night; God helping me, I will pray with my wife to-night." He fulfilled his promise, and his wife said a few weeks afterwards to me, "It seems to me I have heaven upon earth. Whereas once my husband was wont to spend his time with his companions, he stays at home now, and we pray, read the Bible, and sing the praise of God together, and we go in company to the house of God." How much depended, under the grace of God, upon the importunity of that wife! She felt that she must have her husband go to the prayer meeting that night. And just so it was with the four men that brought the poor paralytic to Christ when he was in Capernaum. Although there was a great crowd around

the door, they felt that that was the time, and being unable to get in, they took the poor man on the roof of the house-top and broke it, and immediately his sins were not only forgiven, but he took up his bed and went to his house. "He that goeth forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Let each individual resolve, "I will try and save some soul; I will go to my husband, my son, my father, my mother, and my dear children, and I will try to save some soul to-day." Let him know that "he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

The congregation joined in singing the subjoined stanza:

"Oh for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb."

The President said: I have received letters from two distinguished ministers of the Protestant Episcopal Church, (understood to be the Rev. Dr. Tyng, or St. George's, New York, and the Rev. Dr. Cutler, of Brooklyn,) expressing their great regret at not being able to be present at this Meeting on account of previous engagements. The closing remarks will be made by the Rev. Dr. Spring, followed by a

prayer by the Rev. Mr. Cuyler, and the benediction will be pronounced by the Rev. Dr. Bangs.

SPEECH OF REV. DR. SPRING.

Rev. Dr. Spring took the floor, and spoke thus:

I would hardly consent to make these remarks, were it not that the pathway of thought has been made very obvious to my own mind in the earlier part of the Meeting, from the observations which fell from your own lips, sir, and which I was most delighted to hear reiterated from the lips of the second speaker. It is to that great thought that I wish to bring my own mind; it was to the subduing power of that thought that I wish to lay the emotions of my own heart. When I heard it uttered by my beloved co-presbyter, I could not but turn to the early prediction of the Prophet Isaiah, and see how beautifully in keeping with such a scene as this was that triumphant thought, that in viewing what God had promised to do in the latter day, and in surveying what he had done, and in throwing out these glowing truths which should ignite and enkindle the emotions of the hearts of God's people and the people of prayer all over the world, this simple but wonderful announcement should be made, "In that day, the loftiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted." This is the thought, sir, which has an effect upon this Meeting, and has

an effect upon the Church of God, and which will go through the world and carry with it the power and might of the Holy Ghost. We want nothing but to be humble in order to be holy; we want nothing but to behold the glory of God and to see him exalted by all, and every where, to be happy. Why, sir, when I read the descriptions of the heavenly world, I see nothing so prominent as these two great truths: Man abased, and God exalted. The bright seraphs who sit at His footstool cover their faces with their wings while they cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory;" and the redeemed, who have been washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, cast their bright crowns at his feet, made bright by omnipotent grace, uniting in one song. And oh, sir, what is that? "Blessing, and honour, and dominion, thanksgiving and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever." This is the spirit, sir, of which I, as an aged minister of Jesus Christ, stand in so much need. This is the spirit which I desire to see imparted more and more to my coadjutors in the ministry and my younger brethren, and the spirit which I long to see more and more in the Church of God.

"Behold! what hath God wrought?" This is an inquiry to which the hearts of this assemblage, I have no doubt, respond to-day. Look back during

the past year. Who has wrought what has been done? One of my brethren inquired, "Where has been the motive power?" His object was wise and good in making the enquiry. But I must not enquire of laymen not of ministers. There was a motive power above; and we shall be as lifeless as mere corpses, inanimate dead remains lying in the grave, until the Spirit of God moves. I look back the past year, sir, around these congregations, and there is no question so appropriately presents itself to my thoughts. Oh, look at it! We love to look at the works of man, and they are interesting when they exhibit human ingenuity, invention, and perseverance. But this work of God—oh, this wondrous work of God, for which all other works were made! I love to look at yonder star, and sometimes think of the beautiful thoughts of the great English tragic poet when he said—

"Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold;
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st,
But in his motion like an angel sings
Still quiring to the young ey'd cherubims."

But here over this moral, this Christian horizon, ten thousand times ten thousand bright stars have been glittering, which we can look upon and exclaim, "Behold, what hath God wrought?" each one ex-

claiming, "The hand that made us is Divine." Sir, if we can get low enough; if ministers can lose the spirit of self-glory and mutual self-glorification; if we can have silent and secret piety enough; if we can lose sight of self as delightfully as Watts lost sight of self when he said,

"The more thy glories strike my eyes
The humbler I shall lie;
Thus while I sink, my joys shall rise
Immeasurably high."

Oh, sir, this will be the revival of God's work. This is what we want throughout the world. We shall have no disputes if we have the spirit of our Methodist brother. The Calvinist, the Hopkinsian, the Episcopalian, and the Baptist will all combine if they have the spirit of Christ Jesus, in giving God the glory, and take their places prostrate in the dust. And if I understand your invitation, the object of this Meeting to-day is to give the God of Heaven all the praise. "Oh, praise him sun and moon, and all the stars of night. Praise him, ye ministers of his that do his pleasure. Praise him young and old; young men and maidens, and little children praise him; and let the whole earth be filled with his praise." And to this poor, aged, hard heart, I would say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul."

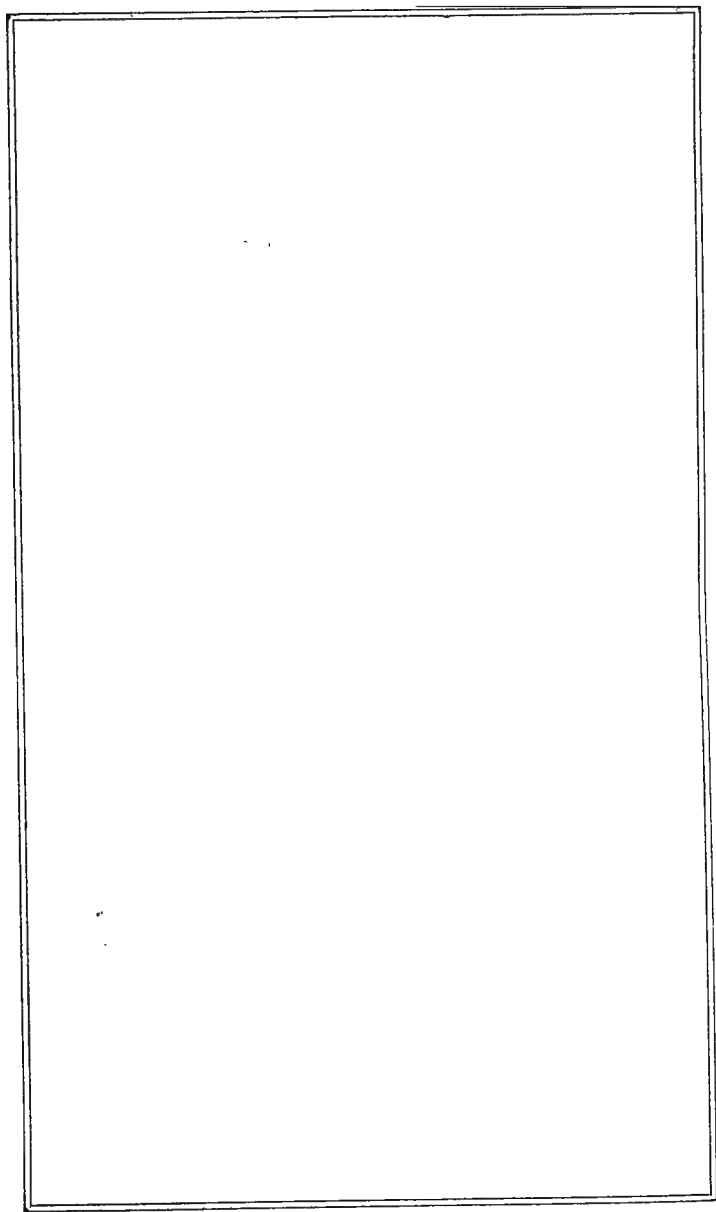
The closing prayer was offered by the Rev. T. L. Cuyler.

The sixteenth Doxology was then sung:

“ May the grace of Christ the Saviour,
And the Father's boundless love,
With the Holy Spirit's favour,
Rest upon us from above.

Thus may we abide in union
With each other and the Lord,
And possess in sweet communion,
Joys which earth cannot afford.”

The benediction was pronounced by the Rev. Dr. Bangs, after which the immense multitude separated.



CHAPTER XIV.

The Noon Meeting in Philadelphia.

AMONG those who attended the first business men's prayer meetings in New York was a young man not twenty-one years of age. As good had resulted from these meetings in New York, why might not equal good be done through their instrumentality in Philadelphia? Surely it was worth the effort. Some of his fellow members of the Young Men's Christian Association, with whom he conversed, being of the same opinion and promising their coöperation in the matter, he applied to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Union Church, for the use of their lecture room. The request was promptly complied with, and the first Noon Prayer Meeting in the city of Philadelphia was held in the Union Church, November 23d, A. D. 1857.

For a time the response on the part of the business men was far from encouraging; thirty-six being the highest number present, and the average attendance

not exceeding twelve. At length it was deemed expedient to remove the Meeting to a more central position, and the ante-room of the spacious Hall of Dr. Jayne having been generously granted by him for this purpose, the first meeting was held there February 3d, 1858. Even there the increase in numbers was very gradual indeed; first twenty, then thirty, forty, fifty, sixty persons. So little in the first instance did the kingdom of God come by observation.

But now almost as in an instant the whole aspect of affairs underwent a most surprising change. Instead of reproducing the scene from memory, permit me to quote the description given at the time by an intelligent and competent witness.

"By Monday, March 8th, the attendance in the smaller apartment of the Hall had reached three hundred, and by the next day it was evident that many were going away for want of room. The persons present, with much fear of the result, yet apparently led by Providence, on Tuesday, March 9th, voted to hold the Meeting the next day at twelve o'clock in the large Hall. It was our privilege to be present at that time, Wednesday noon. The Hall has seats for twenty-five hundred people and *it was filled*. The next day it was filled again, with the galleries, and it was obvious there was not room for the people. The curtain was therefore drawn away from before the

stage, and that thrown open to the audience. The next day, Friday, the partition between the smaller and larger rooms was taken down, and the Hall from street to street thrown open.

“The sight is now grand and solemn. The Hall is immensely high. In the rear, elegantly ornamented boxes extend from the ceiling in a semi-circular form around the stage or platform; and on the stage, and filling the seats, aisles and galleries, *three thousand souls at once on one week-day after another, at its busiest hour, bow before God in prayer for the revival of his work.* The men and women, minister and people, of all denominations or of name, all are welcome—all gather.

“There is no noise, no confusion. A layman conducts the Meeting. Any suitable person may pray or speak to the audience for *five minutes only*. If he do not bring his prayer or remarks to a close in that time, a bell is touched and he gives way. One or two verses of the most spiritual hymns go up, ‘like the sound of many waters;’ requests for prayer for individuals are then made, one layman or minister succeeds another in perfect order and quiet, and after a space which seems a few minutes—so strange, so absorbing, so interesting is the scene—the leader announces that it is one o’clock, and punctual to the moment a minister pronounces the benediction, and the immense audience slowly, quietly and in perfect

order, pass from the Hall ! Some minister remaining, to converse in a small room off the platform, with any who may desire spiritual instruction.

“ No man there, no man perhaps, living or dead, has ever seen any thing like it. On the day of Pentecost Peter preached ; Luther preached : and Livingston, Wesley, and Whitfield ! Great spiritual movements have been usually identified with some eloquent voice. But no name, except the Name that is above every name, is identified with this Meeting. ‘ Yes,’ said a clergyman, on the following Sabbath, ‘ think of the Prayer Meetings this last week at Jayne’s Hall, literally and truly unprecedented and unparalleled in the history of any city or any age ; wave after wave pouring in from the closet, from the family, from the Church, from the union prayer meetings, until the great tidal or tenth wave rolled its mighty surge upon us, swallowing up for the time being all separate sects, creeds, denominations, in the one great, glorious and only Church of the Holy Ghost.’ ”

But even these descriptions fall short of the real extent of religious feeling in the city at large. Jayne’s Hall, immense as it was, was not the only place where Christians of every name met for the purpose of united prayer. Towards the close of that same Pentecostal week a Union Prayer Meeting was called in a church conveniently situated in the northern part of

the city. At the hour appointed some twenty persons might be seen slowly making their way through the unbroken snow drifts to keep their faith with God and with each other. But from the very moment that they crossed the threshold it was manifest that God was with them of a truth, and that the blessing was "coming" to them also. On Friday afternoon it came with all its fullness; the large lecture room, capable of holding some five hundred persons, was full to overflowing. The number of requests for prayer on the table was so great that the leader only looked at them with wonder and did not pretend to read them. "Doubtless," said he, "we all feel just in the same way for our unconverted friends and relatives. For my own part I must ask you to pray for my four sons!" "For my two sons and daughter," said a second. "For my father," said a third. "For my husband," said a lady with a tenderness and energy that thrilled us to our very souls; and thus in less than three minutes perhaps, a hundred similar requests were presented throughout the whole room. Then as with one accord we lifted up our voices and wept together. The place was indeed a "Bochim," and of all the scenes that have been witnessed throughout this whole revival, perhaps there was none more perfectly characteristic and overwhelming. A few days subsequently, at this same meeting, the people of God as by a common impulse rose to their feet, and

there standing before the Lord, solemnly consecrated themselves afresh to his service. The history of that meeting "in souls renewed and sins forgiven," would make a volume of itself.

At the close of one meeting a lady approached a little group of ministers and others, and called one of them aside to speak with her. "I could not find it in my heart," said she, "to leave this room, until I told what God had done for my soul. I came here this afternoon in darkness, heavily burdened with my sin, and well nigh in despair; but during the third prayer I felt as if I could believe in Christ; peace came to my soul, and *now I must go home and tell mother.*" The tone of voice, the expression of countenance, the tears rolling down her cheeks, and joy meanwhile beaming from her eyes, it is utterly impossible for us to describe. Conversion was to her a change as *real*, as for one asleep to awake, for one who was blind to be made to see, for one who was a captive in darkness and a dungeon to be made free.

The lecture room having become too strait for the multitude of worshippers, similar union prayer meetings were established further west and north in the afternoon, and also in the Handel and Haydn Hall at noon, the attendance at the latter place amounting at times to a thousand or twelve hundred persons. Taking all the union prayer meetings together, independent of the regular Church prayer meetings in

the evening, the number of those who daily met for prayer about this time was at least FIVE THOUSAND.

In connection with the Union Prayer Meeting, as if by common consent, union preaching was also established. That all might feel equally free to attend, the favourite places for such preaching were the great public halls, such as Jayne's, Handel and Haydn, and the American Mechanics', all of which were freely tendered by the proprietors for the use of the people without expense. The time appointed for these services was usually on an afternoon of a week day, or at such an hour on the Sabbath as would not interfere with public worship in the churches. Two sermons in this course, by Rev. Dudley A. Tyng, were very memorable, especially the last, where the congregation numbered more than five thousand persons, and where "the slain of the Lord" were more perhaps as the result of a single sermon than almost any sermon in modern times.

Meanwhile the increase of attendance at public worship on the Sabbath, and the number of churches opened for services during the week, was beyond all precedent. During the latter part of the winter, rarely indeed would you pass the lecture room of an evangelical Church in the evening, that was not lighted up for prayer or preaching. Sometimes even the main body of the church itself was not able to accommodate the multitude of worshippers. In some

these services had commenced months or weeks before and were only continued. In others they were now held for the first time. In nearly all there were the manifest indications of the presence and power of the Holy Ghost. The action of the Union Meetings upon the Churches, and of the Churches upon the Union Meetings, was reciprocally delightful and profitable. No rivalry, no collision, the revival spirit was one and the same every where; the same spiritual songs, the same fervent intercession for sinners, the same earnest invitation to come to Christ that they might receive the Life Eternal.

While such wonders as these were occurring all through the city, public attention and interest were awakened in no ordinary degree. In vain was an occasional cry raised here and there of "priestcraft," "enthusiasm," "fanaticism." No definition of these terms seemed at all applicable to the case in hand. In vain did the boldest of the transgressors endeavour to rally an organized opposition. The disposition to cease from the instruction that causeth to err, left the synagogues of Satan deserted and desolate. In vain was every possible expedient resorted to to involve the followers of Christ in angry and unprofitable controversy. Speaking the truth in love, and believing that the best way to refute error was to teach the truth, they humbly relied on the Holy Spirit to make the truth manifest in every man's conscience. The worse

the man, the more did they pity him. The greater the enemy, the more did they pray for him. On one occasion, at the Noon Prayer Meeting, Nena Sahib himself was proposed as a subject of prayer, and by whom of all other persons in the world but by a Christian mother, whose own son was one of the Missionaries so foully murdered by him.

As an evidence of the reality and the extent of the revival, the number of conversions during the year, in Philadelphia, may be safely estimated at ten thousand; one denomination having received three thousand, another eighteen hundred.

Perhaps never, in the entire history of the Church, since the days of the Reformation, were the winds and waves that too often disturb the bosom of the Church, more thoroughly subdued and hushed to rest, than during the few days that intervened from the death of our beloved brother Tyng, until his remains were committed to the tomb. Once more Christianity seemed to reach her true summit level. The kind fraternal coöperative spirit that had thus been developed must of necessity find some appropriate sphere in which to manifest itself. It looked for a field in which to enter, and lo! it found it at once in that of "Union Missions." Union in prayer and effort for the conversion of men; charity in allowing them afterwards to join such denomination as would seem most natural to them. The history of the

“Union Tabernacle,” the “Big Tent” for field preaching, and of the Firemen’s Prayer Meeting; wonderful as they are, are only the ripened fruits of the little germ that was Divinely planted in the Fulton street Prayer Meeting, New York. From that hallowed spot it was that the cry first went forth: “The Lord has risen,” which since that time has been heard all over the land.

G. D., JR.

CHAPTER XV.

General Reflections.

I. No devout or thoughtful mind can review the history which has been given, without being irresistibly led to the conclusion, expressed by the words of the Psalmist upon a different occasion : "THIS IS THE LORD'S DOING ; IT IS MARVELLOUS IN OUR EYES."

It is easy to trace the hand of Providence in every step of the course we have narrated. The appointment of the Missionary just at the period when it was made, the upspringing in his mind of the conception of a business men's prayer meeting, its peculiar features, the state of the times prompting men to pray, the absence of any unusual attractions, the extraordinary rapidity with which mid-day meetings for prayer were multiplied ; all these indicate the immediate agency of the Most High. The Lord alone was exalted in that day. There is no room for human merit to insinuate itself.

A few men, by no means eminent for influence or

position, meet for prayer in the third story of a building in the heart of a dense population devoted to material pursuits; and within a hundred days similar meetings are counted by scores and their attendants by thousands. No new revelation is made or pretended; no mighty machinery set in motion; no Whitfield or Spurgeon appears in the pulpit; no startling tales of conversion are reported, for these followed rather than preceded the popular movement. Yet the minds of men as if by one consent, are turned to the place of prayer. No sooner is a room opened for the purpose than it is filled. And such rooms are opened in every part of the city—a circumstance which was blessed of God to one man's soul in this singular way: A resident of Vermont was in town for some secular purpose, and was struck by the number of signs he saw in different parts of the city, bearing the usual inscription, "Business Men's Prayer Meeting, for one hour," etc. In Fulton street, in John street, in the lower part of Broadway, in the upper part of it, in Ninth street, etc., etc., he was met by the same call to prayer. Now he did not attend one—not one of these Meetings, but after his return home he could not get the thought out of his mind, that business men in New York were in such large numbers meeting for prayer at mid-day. That thought finally was the means of his conversion.

But besides the public gatherings of this nature,

there were innumerable private ones wherever any number of men or women were habitually assembled on the same premises,—a fact, of which the following remarkable illustration was given at the time in the public prints :

“ At one of our large restaurants, a gentleman had taken out a book to read while his dinner was preparing. On the arrival of the waiter with the articles he had called for, he laid down his book, when the waiter said, ‘Is that a Bible, sir?’ ‘No,’ was the reply. ‘Do you want a Bible?’ ‘Yes, sir, I should like to have one.’ The gentleman promised to bring him one the next day. He did so, asking the waiter whether he attended any of the daily prayer meetings. ‘No, sir, we have not time, being engaged here from early in the morning until late in the evening; but at ten o’clock we close, and then all the waiters have a prayer meeting in one of the rooms in this house, and we know that good has resulted.’ ”

Now on what known principle of human nature shall this be accounted for? Some have attributed it to fashion. But who set such a peculiar fashion, and how came it to be so generally followed, when no ordinary inclination of the carnal heart was appealed to? For surely it will not be claimed that worldly men, however upright or amiable, have any natural proclivity for a simple prayer meeting. Others endeavour to explain it by saying that it was an

awakening of the religious sensibility in men's hearts. But this is the very thing we are enquiring after. How came that sensibility to be thus suddenly and widely awakened? No one believed the end of the world to be just at hand; no baleful comet excited the fears of the ignorant or the superstitious; no cunning appeals to popular prejudice subjected the multitude to the control of unseen masters. None of these, nor any thing like them, can be pretended for a moment. A third class said, and with much apparent show of reason, that this result naturally followed from the pecuniary pressure of the times, driving men to religion as their only solace. But does adversity always lead men to God? Is it not, alas! common to see both individuals and communities acting after the example of that wicked king of old, of whom the emphatic record runs, "And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord: this is that king, Ahaz." Besides, in the year 1837, there was a commercial revulsion, quite as wide-spread and unexpected as that of 1857, and tenfold more disastrous; yet there was then no unusual turning to religion, no mighty movement of the popular mind, no upheaving of the foundations. The people as a whole were far more intent upon examining into the political or economical causes of the pecuniary pressure, than into its spiritual bearings, or its final cause as ordained in the providence of God.

No, no; that movement which far more than the opening of China, or the re-conquest of India, or the laying of the Atlantic Telegraph Cable, has rendered the present year memorable; which without exaggeration may be emphatically called the event of the century; which has been more like a literal reproduction of the scenes of Pentecost than any other which has taken place since the tongues of fire sat upon the heads of the Apostles; that movement can justly be traced to no human or earthly source. Look at it as we will, in its commencement, its progress or its results, the conclusion is still the same. **THIS IS THE FINGER OF GOD.** The contact of the Divine author with his work was so direct and close as scarcely to allow the human instrument to appear, much less to become prominent. The only unusual instrumentality was that of which this volume describes the origin—Daily Union Prayer Meetings. Yet prayer is always the confession of want, the resort of weakness, the expression of dependence. As well might the way-side beggar make a merit of stretching forth his hand for casual alms, as Christians attribute inherent worth to their devotions, whether individual or collective. Prayers are indeed the *causa sine qua non*, but never, never the *causa qua*, of spiritual renovation, and least of all, of a general awakening like that which has just visited so large a part of Christendom.

This is the work of Him who rides upon the Heavens by his name JAH. As he looses the bands of Orion and brings forth Mazzaroth in his season; as He, with the breath of spring, dissolves the icy bands of winter, renews the face of the earth and clothes all nature with verdure, freshness and beauty; so He alone breathes upon the cold, torpid, insensible hearts of men, and says: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Then Lazarus in his tomb feels the pulsations of returning vitality. The dry bones leap up covered with flesh and sinews. The dead in trespasses and sins are quickened into new life. Only He who first created the human spirit can re-create that spirit after its fall and decay, so that the Divine image shall once more be reflected in its various faculties and operations. And if this be true in the case of a single individual, much more is it true when the question is of great masses convulsed as if by a moral earthquake, of whole communities swayed by a single impulse, of nations born in a day!

One of the distinguishing characteristics of this work, is not only that the Lord has done it, but that it is so manifest that he has done it. His people have been called, like Israel at the Red Sea, to stand still and see the salvation of God. Their enemies have been compelled to say, "The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them." The extreme frailty of the earthen vessels in which the

heavenly treasure was put, showed, as if with the force of demonstration, that the excellency of the power was of God and not of man. Thus has the pride of human glory been signally stained. Thus have Christians been taught to sing with new emphasis the song of the old Psalmist, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy and Thy truth's sake."

All who with unprejudiced minds consider the work and its origin, arrive at the opinion so clearly and distinctly expressed by the eloquent and evangelical Bishop McIlvaine, in his address to the Diocesan Convention of Ohio, in June last.

"As for myself, I desire to say that I have no doubt 'whence it cometh.' So far as I have had personal opportunities of observing its means, and spirit, and fruits; so far as I have had opportunity of gathering information about it, from judicious minds, in various parts of my own Diocese, and of the country at large, I rejoice in the decided conviction, that it is 'the Lord's doing;' unaccountable by any natural causes, entirely above and beyond what any human device or power could produce; an outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God upon God's people, quickening them to greater earnestness in his service; and upon the unconverted, to make them new creatures in Christ Jesus."

II. The true theory of CHRISTIAN UNION has been remarkably developed in the progress of the Noon Prayer Meeting in Fulton street and the innumerable meetings elsewhere, which took the same type.

The Noon assembly as originally planned by Mr. Lanphier and afterwards successfully carried out, was designed for Christians as such, without respect to denominational distinctions. They who came were not expected to deny or to ignore their peculiarities as members of distinct branches of the Church militant, and still less to forsake their customary ecclesiastical associations for the purpose of forming a new one as a sort of eclectic society, retaining the best features and dropping the worst of all the rest. No such chimerical idea was entertained. On the contrary, nothing was said of denominational views. Men were invited to come simply as those who felt their need of prayer and were willing to subtract an hour from secular duties for the purpose.

As such they came with remarkable unanimity and cordiality. Arminians and Calvinists, Baptists and Pedo-Baptists, Episcopalians and Presbyterians, and Congregationalists and Friends, sat side by side on the same benches, sang the same hymns, said Amen to the same prayers, and were refreshed and comforted by the same exhortations. The simple rule, "NO CONTROVERTED POINTS DISCUSSED," sufficed to prevent any topic or tone being assumed by one to the annoyance

of others ; sufficed, I say, with the occasional and rare exceptions, which were alluded to on a former page, and which really are scarcely worthy of notice. The glory of Christ, the progress of his kingdom, the wants of perishing souls, the need of the Holy Spirit, the desirableness of greater consecration to the Master—these and kindred themes furnished sufficient occupation to mind and heart. And while dwelling on these, other points faded from view, and the worshippers felt that they were brethren, and as such freely mingled their songs and sympathies and tears and hopes and vows.

The natural consequence of this was a warmer spirit of Christian love and a heartier union in all common and general efforts for the good of souls. The participants in these services understood each other better than they did before. Prejudices and misconceptions were removed by close and friendly contact, and while each held his own peculiar views of disputed points as strongly as ever, yet they saw and felt that outside of these there was a common ground where all could act in concert and harmony. This impression was made the more deeply because it was undesigned. It was no part of the original object of the Noon Meeting to unite Christians of various names more closely together. Yet this was the result. For when men had experienced the blessed influences of the service, had felt that the Spirit of

God was there, had found their highest spiritual joys renewed, and received a fresh unction from above, their hearts were irresistibly drawn out toward each other. They became more tender of each other's feelings, interests and good name. They rejoiced in each other's prosperity, and sorrowed in each other's adversity. They could not but feel that although they were distinct regiments, with different uniform and equipments, still they all belonged to one great army, were under the same illustrious Captain, and fought against a common foe, even the zealous and implacable enemy of God and man.

This after all is the only practicable, perhaps the only desirable form of Christian union in our day. Certainly it is not evil alone which denominational divisions produce. They often secure a division of labour, a variety of service and address, an adaptedness to different classes of men, and a degree of zeal and activity, which could scarcely be looked for from any other source. And if all wrath, clamour, bitterness and evil speaking were done away; if Christians could learn to differ without angry contention; if jealousy, suspicions and self-seeking were resolutely frowned upon; by far the worst evils of the prevailing sectarian divisions would be made to disappear. But however this may be, all observation and experience concur to show that these distinctions cannot now be removed. Christians do not see all truth

with sufficient clearness ; they are not free enough from the bias of natural temperament, habit and education ; they have not the requisite ascendancy in the inner man of the spirit over the flesh, to be able to agree in all the details of faith, order and discipline. And it is perhaps hopeless to look for any such attainment under the present conditions of Christian life. Perfect knowledge and perfect holiness are indispensable to perfect unity. The notion of an entire coincidence of thought and feeling among Christ's followers, so that the Church shall realize the ideal conception of a large and variously organized body with a single soul, is an impossible dream for the present, although it is one of the brightest visions which the sure word of prophecy reveals to us for the future.

But there remains, quite apart from this beautiful vision of hope, a wide field in living reality, for the cultivation of what the Apostle calls "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." That blessed unity which arises from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in all who hold the Head, binding them together, despite all diversities of race, colour, customs, name and denomination, into one great whole, animated by the same great purpose and tending to one common end. The condition of this indwelling of the Spirit and the consequent unity of the whole is the bond of peace, that is, the bond which is peace. For the Spirit, as is beautifully shown by the symbolical form

which he assumed when he became visible to the eyes of holy men of old, flies from the scenes of strife and abides only where men dwell together in concord. It is, then, by the cultivation of love, humility, meekness and mutual forbearance, that the Spirit's presence is attracted and retained. Where men, despite conflicting views on minor points, recognize in each other the great features of Christ's likeness, and cherish reciprocal love based upon this common bond uniting them to Him as the Saviour, there is unity—not outward, formal, nominal, and therefore worthless, but inward, real and spiritual; a unity which in its measure fulfills the earnest repeated supplication of Christ for his followers, in the great intercessory prayer recorded in John's Gospel :

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou has sent me.”

Thus an incidental, but very important part of the usefulness of the Noon Prayer Meetings is seen to lie in the spur and stimulus which they gave to this sacred unity. Christians have felt since as they did not feel before. Not that the bands of denominational organization and attachment have been relaxed. This was neither sought nor desired. But men have learned, while firmly holding their own views, to respect those of their brethren; while cultivating their own field, to look with entire sympathy

upon the labours of others; while rejoicing in the particular ecclesiastical name they bear, to feel that there was one yet nobler, which, while it leaves out of view no fundamental truth, yet is able to include every child of Adam who ever learned to lisp the story of the Cross. This is the name CHRISTIAN.

III. The place of the LAY ELEMENT in the diffusion of the Gospel, is another point which the Noon Meetings have contributed to bring out and establish with precision and clearness.

In these services, the responsibility for interest and success has been made to rest directly upon the laity as such. It is true clergymen were not excluded, but on the contrary, were gladly welcomed. Very many of various names have attended from time to time and have often added largely to the interest and instructiveness of the occasion by their fervent intercessions and their judicious and pointed addresses. Still the hour and the place of meeting show that no reliance was placed upon any special agency and influence of the clergy. The assembly was designed for persons actively engaged in secular pursuits—that they might be refreshed amid the toils and cares of life, by a daily season of prayer and praise, and, in accordance with the Apostolic precept, “Exhort one another daily,” by simple unstudied words of mutual exhortation. This end, we have already seen, was fully accomplished.

Christians found it good to be there. They loved the place of mid-day prayer. They found their hearts cheered and their souls edified by the exercises. Simple as these exercises were, free from any factitious excitement, destitute of aught which could minister to other than religious tastes, they were found to possess a charm which induced men to make it a point to attend them and to participate actively in them, as the Lord gave the ability and the opportunity.

Had this been all, the intention and desire of the originators of the enterprise would doubtless have been fully gratified. But it was not all. A kind Providence, here, as so often elsewhere, made the results of the movement far outstrip the views of its projectors. Such a meeting could not long remain a mere scene of enjoyment, however pure and spiritual, a place only of comfort, and exhilaration and rest. The rest *remaineth* for the people of God. It is not enjoyed here, save in a qualified sense. Life is a season of work, and the true Christian asks day after day, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? and asks it, not as Pilate did his weighty enquiry, without waiting for the answer, but with an earnest desire to run with enlarged heart in the way of the Lord's commandments. The opening for Christian activity in this case soon showed itself.

Requests for prayers for impenitent or awakened persons, presented sometimes by the parties them-

selves, but more generally by their friends, began to multiply. And the voice of intercession became daily more tender and tearful and urgent and importunate. God's people wrestled with Him like the patriarch of old, and at times the place became a Bochim.

Now it was impossible for men with Christian hearts to join sincerely in such supplications, and then sit still. It was impossible for souls touched with the love of Jesus to have the condition of Christless persons brought habitually before them, and yet remain unconcerned and inactive. The fire burned within, their own minds got into a glow, and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth spoke. They began to work for Christ and for the conversion of sinners. They conversed in private with impenitent friends, they invited them to the Noon Meeting, when that overflowed they instituted other meetings of a similar kind, they distributed tracts and handbills and books, they made it part of their business to labour in one or all of these ways, and they expended time and pains and money in such labour.

Of course it is not meant that this was now done for the first time ; for earnest Christians have always been engaged more or less in doing good in these or in similar ways. But the thing was now done on a broader scale, by a larger number of persons, and with a greater proportion of immediate success. The

Noon Prayer Meeting was a laymen's meeting from the commencement, and its success acted directly upon laymen in revealing to them the immense amount of unemployed talent which lay wrapped up in a napkin, and in stimulating them to an active, diligent and conscientious use of their faculties and opportunities. The too common notion that the minister, with possibly the elders and deacons, is to do all the work in applying the Gospel to the hearts of men, and that the main body of believers are to be gently wafted to heaven "on flowery beds of ease," was effectually broken up. The true conception of the Church, given so often by the Apostle, as a living organism composed of various parts, each of which has its appropriate function, the performance of which is indispensable to the integrity and perfection of the whole, was beautifully brought out and exemplified.

Nor was the movement marred by extravagance or misguided zeal. The sacred office of the ministry was in no degree trenched upon. There was no rash interference with institutions of Divine appointment and immemorial usage. The energies of men were employed in coördination with the commissioned minister of Christ, or under his direction; and so far from the two agencies clashing, each was furthered by the other, working in its appropriate sphere. There is a work which the ministry alone can perform, because they alone are called and trained for it. And

there is a work which laymen only can do, because no minister who seeks properly to discharge the other duties of his office, can find the requisite time for this; and moreover, there is a large class of persons who feel the weight of an exhortation or appeal much more when it comes from one who, it is known, does not and cannot utter it as a matter of professional duty.

There is therefore ample room for both these instrumentalities, and both should be employed. Both must be, if ever the millenium is to dawn on the gloomy and troubled horizon of this world. Every man is to say to his neighbour, Know the Lord. The Christian is to get good by doing good. He is to be watered himself by watering others. He is to work in the vineyard. He is to follow the example of Him who went about doing good. He is not to go to Heaven alone, but to take others with him. Carrying in his heart from day to day a fresh sense of his obligations to the One who bought him with his blood, he is to labour to bring others to the service and praise of that blessed Master—a sentiment which we find exemplified even under the dim light and narrow restrictions of the elder dispensation. In the most humble and touching of all the penitential Psalms, no sooner does the royal penitent obtain a ray of hope and feel the hand of Divine forgiveness healing his broken bones, than he announces his pur-

pose to point others to the same great source of deliverance and blessing: "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

Such is always the natural instinct of a renewed nature. "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." Too often this spontaneous impulse is crushed by timidity, the fear of man, a false shame, or a foolish regard to conventional usages. Then, by a natural reaction, faith is weakened, love grows cold and the sense of eternal things declines in vividness and power. And great is the loss to the believer himself and to the Master's cause! But if it be fully seen that it is part of the normal conception of a Christian, that he should have the salvation of others always as a distinct and well defined object before his mind; if believers act habitually under the conviction expressed by James, "He which converteth the sinner from the error of his ways shall save his soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins," then there is a vast gain on all sides. There is gain to the Christian labourer, for, not to mention other considerations, the blessed work is its own reward. And there is gain to the Master's cause, for such labour is never in vain in the Lord. One may sow, and another reap; but in the end, "both he that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together."

IV. Another truth repeated and signally verified in the Noon Meeting, is the POWER OF PRAYER.

As has been related, the Meeting arose out of a fresh and vivid sense of the present value of daily prayer amid life's cares and toils. The same experience was continued, and enjoyed in a still larger measure by those who used this means of grace. A joyful feeling of relief, refreshment and peace was diffused through their souls, when they thus turned aside from secular pursuits, and held communion with God "in humble, grateful prayer." Care was lightened, burdens were removed, the damaging taint of worldliness wiped away and a sweet sense of the Divine presence shed abroad in the heart. It was experience of this kind which at an early period drew many Christians of various denominations to the Consistory building. They were drawn there by a spiritual attraction, which is always irresistible to a living Christian. Just as the inhabitants of the air and of the sea love the element in which they live and move, so do renewed hearts love the atmosphere of a praying circle. There they are at home. There they breathe freely. There they enjoy life.

But this effect of prayer—its influence at the time upon the offerer,—although great and important, is not the only, nor even the principal end which suppliants seek. There are theories of so-called Christianity, which maintain this soulless dogma, holding that it is

impossible for human petitions to affect the stately march of the Divine purposes, and that therefore the sole function of prayer is to bring the suppliant's mind into a proper frame by his conversance with God and eternal things. But it may well be questioned whether any human being ever did or could pray under such a conviction. He may have begun with this view, but if he continued, inevitably the heart would get the better of the head, and the man would plead as though he were directly seeking and expecting some gift from above. It is only when the direct benefit of prayer is before the mind, that its indirect advantages are obtained. Reverse the order, and make the latter the primary objects of desire, and they are lost. The soul cannot be worked up to genuine feeling through an idle form, the very terms of which must all the while appear a solemn mockery.

The attendants at the Noon Meeting were not philosophers or theorizers, but humble believers. They put implicit faith in the Divine word. God having been pleased to appoint a fixed connection between the prayers of his people and the reception of his blessings, and having therefore enjoined habitual prayer as an indispensable condition of prosperity in the Divine life, they, in the devout conviction that by obeying the Lord's direction they would surely secure his favour, came together to entreat the fulfillment of his promises. They came together, not to

go through a form, not to repeat set words, however excellent or even scriptural, but to pray, to call upon God as did the perishing mariners who were carrying Jonah to Tarshish, or as Peter did when he began to sink beneath the waves of Galilee. Immediate, pressing wants were before their minds, wants which no earthly power could meet; and they came to God with a feeling of entire dependance upon his power and grace. They cried aloud with fervour and constancy.

And they were answered with a promptness and celerity never surpassed in the history of the Church. The instances were not rare in which persons under conviction of sin would have their condition spread out before God, and his grace implored in their behalf; and the next information which reached the Meeting would be that these very persons had passed from darkness to light, and were rejoicing in the assurance of forgiveness through the blood of Christ. At other times, prayer would be offered in behalf of souls far away, quite beyond the possibility of any direct efforts for them being put forth by those who presented their names; and it would be found afterwards, that just when God's people were praying, he was exerting his mighty power, even that power by which he raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the grave. "And it shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear."

It was impossible not to notice these direct and speedy answers to prayer. They were thankfully acknowledged, and made the basis of renewed and earnest supplication for still greater blessings.

There was, therefore, a deep conviction that there is power in prayer, that it takes hold of the Almighty arm, that the connection between asking and receiving is as fixed and invariable as between any cause and its effect in the natural world. The hand of the Lord could operate any where and under all circumstances—just as well in a foreign land or in mid-ocean, as at home, where every means of instruction and appeal existed in profusion. Nothing was too hard for him. No case exceeded his power. No circumstances could exclude his gracious influence. Encouraged by such unusual and striking manifestations of the Divine presence and faithfulness, men prayed with an ardour, a boldness, an urgency not often seen. Faith became more simple and mighty, in proportion to its simplicity. Cutting loose from an arm of flesh, it rested with full assurance upon the tried and sure word of God, and, as in the case of Abraham, hoped even against hope.

This has been decidedly the most distinguishing and characteristic of all the features which marked the Work of Grace of the present year. It began in prayer, and it was carried on by prayer. Wherever the reviving and awakening influence of the Divine

Spirit was enjoyed, almost invariably it was preceded by the assembling together of the people of God to pray. The Word of God was honoured, the various collateral agencies of the Church were recognized, the movements of Providence held a distinct and prominent place, but far above all other means towered this one of fervent, believing supplication. God was on the throne, and his people in the dust. Penetrated with a deep sense of unworthiness and helplessness, they took hold of the Divine covenant and promise, and pleaded them with an importunity like that of the Syro-Phenician woman, or of her who, by her continual coming, wrung even from an unjust judge the recognition of her rights.

God heard his own elect when they thus cried unto him. He turned their captivity. He did great things for them whereof they were glad. He poured out blessings even beyond their expectations. They could well address him in the Psalmist's words :

“O thou that hearest prayer!”

V. The duty assigned to the writer of this Volume was simply that of narrator. His endeavour has been to weave together the chief facts which make up the history of the Noon Prayer Meeting, with such explanations as seemed necessary to show the connection of events, and put the distant reader on a level with those in the immediate vicinity of the place where God

made this gracious development of his power and wisdom. It was no part of his purpose to sit in judgment upon the work itself or any of its details, or to furnish an exhaustive analysis of its principles and its lessons. But having ventured in this closing chapter to specify some of the more marked features of the history he has recorded, he is unwilling to conclude the Book without at least a caution on two points which seem to him of no small importance.

1. The first one of these is presented in the following brief extract from some remarks made in the Consistory building a month or two ago, by an intelligent gentleman from the interior of this state: "He considered that the great power of the Church for the conversion of souls now consisted in the union prayer meeting and the union Sunday school." Were this but one person's opinion, the matter would be scarcely worthy of notice. But there is reason to fear that many, carried away by the impulses of the hour, share in the same extravagant sentiment. Beholding remarkable results following almost at once from the gathering of Christians of different names for prayer, and comparing this with the protracted periods during which the simple preaching of the word not unfrequently seems to be almost without effect, they leap to the conclusion that the latter is a worn out and obsolete instrumentality, and the union prayer meeting the chief means for bringing in the latter-day glory.

To name this preposterous notion to a sober-minded man is to secure its condemnation. The ministry of the word and ordinances is and ever has been, and, we need not scruple to say, ever will be, the grand means of conviction, conversion and sanctification—all other agencies whatsoever being subordinate and accessory. To teach otherwise is to impeach the wisdom of Him who appointed this agency, and who has perpetuated it through all the ages of time down to our own day. To it He has given the commission, the promise, the authority and the blessing. More than once have men, fired with a zeal without knowledge, conceived the plan of a shorter road to great results, but they have always had to come back to the foolishness of preaching—the foolishness of God here as elsewhere being wiser than men. So will it surely be now, if the sentiment we are opposing, should succeed in gaining even a temporary foothold. But the misfortune is that while men are practically discovering the fallacy of the notion, great dishonour will be done to God, and great harm to the souls of men. Fervent exhortation and conversational appeals are of inestimable value in supplementing and carrying out the instruction of the pulpit, but they cannot take its place. They lack the tone of authority, the systematic presentation of truth, the power to illuminate the understanding which the pulpit, honestly managed, always possesses. The usefulness of the union prayer meeting

presupposes previous indoctrination of men by the ministry. Take away that groundwork for its exercises, and although feeling may be excited even to a violent pitch, it will be the rapid blaze of stubble leaving the field "burnt over" and hopeless, whereas the excitement which is based upon the truth, will last as long as the material upon which it rests.

2. The other error is the exaggerated importance attached to the exercises, and especially the prayers offered, in the Consistory building. Good people from all the parts of the country and even from the other side of the ocean, send requests for prayers to this Meeting, as if they supposed there was some hidden efficacy, some mysterious power in the place or the persons occupying it, by virtue of which prayers offered there ascended directly and necessarily to the exalted Mediator, and were by Him so pleaded before the eternal Father as to secure a certain and immediate answer. Sometimes persons otherwise intelligent and pious, have been known to say that they "have great faith in the Fulton street Meeting"—thus degrading the object of faith from the word and promises of the Most High down to a mere company of fellow worms, themselves every day and every hour in need of the Divine compassion.

Here again to name the error is to condemn it. It is not to be denied that a sacred and tender interest attaches to the Consistory building, where the first

Noon. Prayer Meeting began. Doubtless, that spot has been the birth-place of more serious and saving impressions during the past year than any other in this land or elsewhere. Hallowed memories will endear it to the hearts of the people of God for generations to come. But all this is no excuse for giving to it the honour which is due to God alone. And if there be in the whole category of human events one thing which is calculated to strip it of its prestige, to cause ICHABOD to be written upon its walls and to render it offensive and abominable, it is this of regarding it with superstitious reverence, and tying down the glorious and adorable sovereignty of omnipotent grace to its prayers and intercessions, every one of which, however fervent and spiritual, yet needs to be sprinkled with atoning blood, before it can enter with the least acceptance into the presence of the Most High. God is a jealous God, and his glory will he not give another. The attempt has often been made in the history of the Church to rob him of his honour under various plausible pretences, some of them exhibiting a remarkable counterfeit of gratitude and piety, but in the end his outraged dignity has avenged itself to the confusion and dismay of those who rashly invaded the crown rights of Zion's great King. And as the Lord has done before, so He can and He will do, now and hereafter.

But the Author, while compelled by a sense of duty,

not to be satisfied in any other way, to express these views, yet hopes better things and things which accompany salvation, although he thus speaks. He hopes that God in his mercy will give grace to the brethren who assemble daily in the old spot, to guard carefully their own hearts; that he will clothe them with humility as with a garment; that he will imbue them more and more with a sense of their entire dependence, and inspire them with the mind of those glorified saints in heaven, who, exalted as they are, yet cast their crowns at the feet of the Lamb. With such a spirit dominant in all hearts, with penitence and humility going hand in hand with faith and zeal, with the maintenance of a zealous regard for the Divine honour, there will be reason to look for a continuance, and even an increase of the blessings hitherto vouchsafed. The House of Prayer shall be a House of Mercy, a genuine Bethesda to innumerable souls, and the fervour of petition shall be rivalled by the fervour of thanksgiving for what God has done and is doing in the unsearchable riches of his grace.

NOW UNTO THE KING, ETERNAL, IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE, THE ONLY WISE GOD, BE HONOUR AND GLOEY FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

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